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The Involvement of Aboriginal Groups and Environmental Organizations in a Regional Planning Strategy for the Northern East Slopes of Alberta

by

Colette Marie Yvonne Fluet ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

in

Rural Sociology

Department of Rural Economy

Edmonton, Alberta

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Involvement of Aboriginal Groups and Environmental Organizations in a Regional Planning Strategy for the Northern East Slopes of Alberta submitted by Colette Marie Yvonne Fluet in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Rural Sociology.

August 18, 2003

Dr. Laurie Adkin

Abstract

This qualitative study is a critical analysis of the Northern East Slopes (NES) Strategy, a regional planning initiative in Alberta, Canada. In addition to evaluating the quality of the involvement of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy, this study used the concept of network governance to characterize state-society relations in Alberta's environmental policy network more generally. Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with over fifty key informants and a review of NES Strategy documents revealed that the close, facilitative relationship of industry and government in Alberta resulted in the forestry and oil and gas industries playing a central role in the Strategy. Environmental organizations and aboriginal groups faced various barriers to meaningful participation in the Strategy, including the narrow scope of the Strategy that largely excluded ecocentric perspectives; inappropriate mechanisms for Aboriginal representation and participation; and a lack of trust on the part of both groups in government-led initiatives. A key conclusion of this study is that the policy process in this case was tightly controlled to produce a pre-determined set of pro-development outcomes, with minimal opportunity for public influence over the process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Resources in Alberta's boreal forest have come under increasing pressure in recent years as the cumulative impacts of decades of industrial development become apparent and tensions between multiple users of the land base continue to grow. One attempt of the provincial government to address the growing complexities of resource management is the Northern East Slopes (NES) Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management Strategy, commonly called the NES Strategy. This strategy is a regional planning pilot project for the province, and is intended to "enhance communication, cooperation, and consultation among industries, communities, governments and Aboriginal peoples" and to "balance use between diverse interests" (Regional Steering Group 2001, p.4, 6).

The NES project, with its emphasis on the involvement of various stakeholders in the region, is characteristic of a growing trend of network governance, where networks between the state and other societal groups form the basis of the policy community. Network governance theorists suggest that examples of network governance are emerging as neo-liberal regimes attempt to deal with changing policy problems, a more educated and organized public, and their own limitations of staff and resources. A combination of those three factors are said to make it necessary for the state to draw on the expertise of various groups in civil society in order to manage current policy problems.

While examples of network governance between the state and industry have been studied to a fair degree and such a model has proven to be largely successful in fostering economic development (Evans 1995), the dynamics of networks between the state and other societal groups, such as environmental organizations and aboriginal groups, have been a lesser focus of network governance research. Evans argues that the inclusion of additional societal groups in network governance arrangements is necessary to ensure the legitimation of the state but existing research provides little insight into how networks may be developed with these groups. Policy network literature, specifically that dealing with Canada's natural resource and environmental policy networks, sheds light on some of the complexities involved when governments develop networks with societal groups other than industry and labour. This study will explore the complexities of involving environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) and Aboriginal groups in policy networks and the potential for the development of network governance arrangements of the broad nature promoted by Evans, in the case of the Northern East Slopes Strategy in Alberta.

Research Purpose and Objectives

Through qualitative interviews with representatives from government, environmental organizations, Aboriginal groups and industry, I will document the Northern East Slopes Strategy public involvement process and characterize it using the categories of network governance and policy network theory. Particular focus is given to the involvement of ENGOs and Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy network. As well, I will identify factors that enable or constrain these groups in their participation in the network and alternative strategies outside of the network through which they may pursue their environmental policy goals.

My objectives are to gain a clear understanding of the NES Strategy process and the methods by which the involvement of Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations was sought. I will inquire as to the difficulties perceived by participants to involve ENGOs and Aboriginal representatives in the NES Strategy process and possible ways to improve the involvement of these groups. I will identify the strategies actors in these two groups are employing to pursue their environmental management objectives despite the difficulties they may have experienced in the NES network. By comparing the involvement of Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations with that of the forestry and oil and gas industries, I will be able to draw comparisons about these groups' positions in Alberta's natural resource and environmental policy network and assess the role each of these stakeholder groups has played in the NES Strategy.

Significance and Contributions of the Research

In practical terms, the timing of this study is fortunate in that the Northern East Slopes project is one of two pilot projects that will guide regional planning of the entire province in the coming years (Alberta Environment 2000). An evaluation of the quality of the NES Strategy process will be extremely valuable given the amount of resources that will be devoted to the regional planning processes and the magnitude of the impact that these plans are intended to have on the management of provincial resources. As well, support or buy-in of ENGOs and Aboriginal communities will be important for the success of these initiatives given that one impetus behind the regional plans is to reduce conflict among stakeholders with interests in the land base (Regional Steering Group 2000).

The results of this study will provide participants in the NES Strategy process with a clear picture of the policy network of which they are a part. The information from this study can be used by participants to modify their strategies to achieve their policy goals, be it inside or outside of the network. As well, ideally, the feedback will be considered by the government personnel in charge of the NES Strategy and future regional strategies, who may adapt future regional planning processes to more effectively include ENGOs and Aboriginal groups.

This case study adds to an existing body of research on environmental policy formation in Alberta, and, therefore, to the general characterization or theorization of state-society relationships in the province. The NES Strategy process, as documented here, can be compared with accounts of previous environmental policy processes in the province, like the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy and the Special Places 2000 program, to provide a clearer picture of the direction the provincial government is taking with public involvement processes regarding natural resource and environmental management. This research will also make a theoretical contribution to the bodies of literature on network governance and public participation. While network governance studies have tended to focus on the involvement of industry in policy networks, this research will further our understanding of the particular issues that arise with regard to the participation of ENGOs and Aboriginal groups in network governance arrangements. As well, public participation literature at times can overemphasize process, implying that the presence of key process ingredients, like mechanisms for two-way flow of information and compensation of expenses for participants, will result in quality involvement of stakeholders. This thesis provides evidence of the important role that historical context plays in any stakeholder involvement process. The history of relationships between key actors, particularly vis-à-vis the state, if fraught with mistrust, may undermine even the best designed public involvement process. Thus, governments must evaluate the quality of these relationships and address any shortcomings before they can expect successful participation of these stakeholders. Academics writing on public participation processes must also be cognizant of the fundamental impact that historical context will have on public involvement processes and incorporate this consideration into their research.

Chapter 2: Background

The context in which the Northern East Slopes Strategy took place is of key importance in this study. In this chapter, I will briefly describe the history of electoral politics in Alberta, and provide an overview of the involvement of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in recent land and environmental management conflicts in the province. A brief review of the Alberta context of natural resource management and environmental planning then precedes a description of the NES Strategy process.

Politics in Alberta: From Social Credit to Klein

Alberta has a long history of one-party rule: the Social Credit party governed Alberta from 1935-1971, only to be followed by the Progressive Conservatives' 30 year reign of the province (Harrison 1995a). Social Credit support in the early days came from a broad coalition of reformers, including "farmers, workers, the unemployed, struggling small-business people, and some middle-class professionals" (Smith 2001, p. 281). In the Great Depression context, the Social Credit party targeted Bay Street industrialists and bankers as the cause of the economic hard times Albertans were experiencing (Harrison 1995a), and delivered a broad indictment of capitalism itself (Smith 2001). During these early years of Social Credit Rule, a wide range of progressive labour, health and education reforms were passed, which were popular with the rank and file but were seen by the business community as too socialist (Smith 2001).

When Ernest Manning came to power in 1943, the Social Credit party began to move right. Socialism, more so than big business, was increasingly seen as the enemy of the party (Smith 2001). During Manning's time in office, the oil discoveries of the late 1940s provided the government with high revenues which allowed Manning to spend far more than the national average on social services like education, health and public welfare, highways, improved telephone service, and electrification schemes (Smith 2001). This abundance of wealth and the spending that followed is viewed as the most important factor to explain the party's continued rule until 1971 (Smith 2001).

Demographic and class structure changes would eventually lead to the change in government though. Social Credit's voter base had been in the rural areas but Alberta's urban population was growing. Distortions in the electoral system resulted in rural voters, who made up only a quarter of Alberta's population, electing half of the members of the legislature (Wilson 1995). With the Social Credit Party being out of step with urban constituents and a change in electoral distributions that resulted in seven additional urban seats, the Social Credit party was finally dethroned and the Progressive Conservatives (PCs) came to power (Smith 2001).

The election of the PCs came at a time of economic prosperity for the province. The party shifted government spending from social development to economic development and began to win over rural support with subsidies, loan program and high spending on highway development (Smith 2001). They also expanded government, creating new departments and adding civil servant positions.

In 1982, however, the price of oil dropped and the recession of the 1980s hit Alberta. The recession coincided with Pierre Trudeau's term as Prime Minister and the birth of the National Energy Policy, which Westerners viewed as a money-grab by Ottawa (Smith 2001). To try and quell the growing unrest, government continued spending, offering subsidies to home owners, farmers, small businesses and the oil and gas industry (ibid). With this increased spending and the threat of the "socialist" New Democratic Party lurking if the PCs were not elected again, the party managed to win the 1982 provincial election (ibid).

Following the election, the government began to cut back the size of the public sector. Don Getty replaced Peter Lougheed as Premier just before oil and gas prices dropped dramatically at the end of 1985 from the recovery they had made in 1984 and early 1985 (Smith 2001). Again, with promises of low-interest loans to farmers, equity financing and tax holidays to small business people, and reduced royalty rates for the oil industry, the PCs managed to maintain power in the 1986 election, although with a considerable drop in support.[1]

After the 1986 election, government cuts to the public service continued and social programs were cut in real dollars. Oil and gas revenues dropped from 55 percent of total public revenues to 25 per cent between 1980 and 1990 (Smith 2001, p. 290). In an effort to create revenue, Getty's government introduced various user fees and increased personal income taxes, although revenue from corporate income taxes remained the same throughout this period (Smith 2001). In the lead-up to the 1989 election, the government again offered loans to farmers to try to maintain the rural vote and succeeded to do so, for one final time under Getty's leadership (ibid).

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[1] Support for the PCs dropped from 62.2 per cent of the popular vote and 75 seats in 1982 to 51.1 per cent and 61 seats in 1986 (Smith 2001, p. 290).

By 1992, however, following the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in bad business loans, the provincial Conservatives wanted Getty out of the leadership seat. Ralph Klein replaced Getty, promising to balance the provincial budget even if massive cuts were necessary (Smith 2001). Under Klein's leadership, the PCs won the 1993 election. The next year's budget introduced spending cuts of 20 per cent on average, with some government departments, like environment, facing a 30 per cent budget cut (Smith 2001). While Klein argued that the massive cuts to public services were necessary to eliminate the deficit that had been created by "out of control" public spending, others argued that the deficit was a result of low energy prices and excessive subsidies to the corporate sector (Smith 2001). Klein's critics pointed out that the very years Klein claimed social spending was out of control were years during which social programs were the target of cutbacks, although these cutbacks were often masked by inflation (Smith 2001). Despite the heavy cutbacks on social spending after the 1993 election, Klein and the provincial Tories went on to win the 1997 and 2001 elections.

Political scientists offer the following explanations for the continued success of the PC party in Alberta. It is generally held by political scientists in Alberta that the provincial Conservatives under Ralph Klein's leadership and the Reform party (now Alliance Party) in federal politics have a great deal in common (Harrison and Johnston 1996; Laycock 2002; Stewart 1995; Harrison

1995b). The Reform Party's popularity is said to be based on neo-conservative and right-wing populist strategies, both of which Klein employs in Alberta as well (Harrison and Johnston 1996; Laycock 2002). Neo-conservatism, or neo-liberalism as it is also known, refers to "an amalgam of classical economic and political liberalism and traditional social and moral conservatism" which promotes "capitalistic socioeconomic structures and beliefs (i.e., free-market system, individualism, a minimal state, and property rights) while espousing a belief in natural inequalities, natural authorities, and traditional moral values" (Harrison and Johnston 1996, para. 5). While neo-conservatism is considered a key factor in the support of the Reform party, Harrison and Johnston (1996) found that right-wing populism was an even greater attraction for Reform voters. The overlap between Reform voters and the support base of the provincial Tories makes it safe to conclude that right-wing populism also explains the Klein government's appeal to Albertans.

Populism is "a form of political mobilization forged around the notion of 'the people' in opposition to some outside 'power bloc'" (Harrison and Johnston 1996, para. 7). At times this outside power bloc has been big business, such as the Bay Street industrialists and bankers in the 1930s, or big government, such as Trudeau's administration (Harrison 1995a). More recently in Alberta, the "enemy of the people" is identified as "special interest" groups, which include social movements like women's, environmental, and Aboriginal groups; welfare recipients; the sick; the elderly; the working poor; children; certain elements of the middle classes such as teachers, professors, doctors; public-sector employees who are dependent on state spending; and labour (Smith 2001, p. 300). These groups are seen as having excessive influence on social policy and governmental expenditures (Harrison and Johnston 1996, para. 14) and as being a threat to those Albertans, primarily males from Anglo-Saxon/Celtic ethnic groups, who have seen their traditionally high status challenged by such groups (Harrison and Krahn 1995).

Recognizing that support for the provincial Tories, for multiple elections, has come from rural voters, and that the appeal of the Klein administration is its neo-liberal and right-wing populist strategies, will add to our understanding of the process and initial outcomes of the NES Strategy.

The Involvement of Environmental Organizations in Recent Land and Environmental Management Conflicts in Alberta

Through the 1980s and 90s, Alberta was the site of a number of heated land and environmental management controversies. What follows is a brief overview of four such cases, the first two being public hearings and the last two being policy processes: the Alberta Pacific pulp mill public hearings, the Cheviot mine proposal hearings, the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy, and the Special Places 2000 program.

The Alberta-Pacific Pulp Mill Public Hearings. The Alberta-Pacific, or Al-Pac, public review hearings followed an earlier public hearing on the Daishowa pulp mill project for Peace River in the mid-80s. In the Daishowa case, the pulp mill project was approved with no major challenges due to the absence of a "well-organized, well-informed opposition" (Pratt and Urquhart 1994, p. 104). Opposition to the pulp mill that was lacking at the time of approval of the project eventually emerged, however, with several forestry-oriented environmental groups forming in the province, like Friends of the Peace and Friends of the North (Pratt and Urquhart 1994). Many of the challenges to Daishowa's operations were taken to the courts. In 1992, the Sierra Legal Defense Fund successfully challenged the legality of Daishowa's logging operations in Wood Buffalo Park (Pratt and Urquhart 1994).[2] While this court challenge was successful, many others in the stream of litigation brought against Daishowa failed and, in one case, the Alberta Wilderness Association was ordered to pay $77,000 for court costs to the provincial government and Daishowa (Pratt and Urquhart 1994, p. 130).

In contrast to the Daishowa project that received approval before opposition could effectively mobilize, the Al-Pac project spurred the formation of an environmental group called Friends of the Athabasca even before the Al-Pac project was officially announced (Pratt and Urquhart 1994). Under pressure from the public, Premier Getty agreed to submit the Al-Pac proposal to a review process. It was at this time that Ralph Klein, new to provincial politics, was appointed as Minister of the Environment (Pratt and Urquhart 1994). At first, environmentalists were enthusiastic about the new Minister of Environment as Klein stated that he believed that the government should accept whatever recommendations were made by the review panel. However, with his only ally being public opinion, Klein, in the end, was not able to oppose "the premier, economic development ministers, one of the world's most powerful multinationals, and the rank and file of the PC party" (McInnis and Urquhart 1995, p. 244).

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[2] The challenge was technically of the legality of Canfor's lease in Wood Buffalo National Park, under which Daishowa was logging (Pratt and Urquhart 1994).

With the Al-Pac proposal coming under both provincial and federal jurisdiction, the review panel for the Al-Pac project consisted of four provincial appointees, two federal appointees, a chairperson, and an observer from the Northwest Territories who eventually gained full board member status (Edwards 1990). The review panel's recommendations would be subject to approval by the province (ibid). Many opponents of the Al-Pac proposal were unhappy with the Terms of Reference set out for the review panel by the province as they did not allow the panel to review the impacts of timber harvesting other than on reserve land, which was under federal jurisdiction (Edwards 1990; Richardson 1993).

In total, 27 meetings were held in 11 communities from October 30 to December 15, 1989 (Edwards 1990). The panel received 750 written submissions and heard 250 oral presentations during the course of the hearings (ibid) and concluded that the proposal should not go ahead until further research was done on the mill's effluent and the cumulative effects this pulp mill would have on the river system (Edwards 1990). Premier Getty initially supported the review board's decision, but later, after a private meeting with Al-Pac executives, reversed his position and called the recommendations flawed and unbalanced (Richardson 1993; Pratt and Urquhart 1994). Jaakko Pöyry, a Finnish consulting firm, was hired to conduct an "independent" assessment of the scientific data submitted to the review board (Richardson 1990). Jaakko Pöyry's second opinion supported the original review panel's recommendations but was less certain that the flaws in Al-Pac's proposal need halt the project. In the meantime, Al-Pac presented the government with proposed modifications to the design of the pulp mill. A three member "Scientific Review Panel" comprised of provincial and federal civil servants was struck to review the "technical feasibility" of the modified proposal (Richardson 1990). This review excluded considerations of effluent and cumulative effects, which had been the major concerns of opponents to the original proposal (Richardson 1990). The Scientific Review Panel recommended the mill proceed and in December, 1990, while Klein was attending an environmental conference in Vancouver, Getty announced final approval of the Al-Pac project (McInnis 1995).

The overturning of the initial review panel's decision and the elimination of concerns regarding effluent and cumulative effects from the final review of the process angered many people who had participated in the initial hearings, including some of the original review panel members. Environmentalists felt betrayed by the Al-Pac decision and any credibility Klein might have had with Alberta environmentalists was shredded (Pratt and Urquhart 1994).

Cheviot Mine Proposal Hearings. The hearings for the Cheviot Mine proposal in Alberta were another key event in the history of environmental organizations in the province and is an example of how heated debates over land management can be between environmentalists and development supporters (Urquhart 2001). It was also a case where environmental organizations took their concerns to the courts after dissatisfaction with the public hearing process. In

1996, a proposal for an open-pit coal mine was submitted to the provincial government by Cardinal River Coals Ltd., a subsidiary of Luscar. The Cheviot mine, to be located along the boundary of Jasper National Park, was to replace Luscar Mine, which employed 400 persons in the region. Environmental groups were concerned about the impact the 23 km long by 3 km wide mine would have on habitat for grizzly bears, harlequin ducks and other wildlife. Provincial approval for the mine was granted in August 1997 after six months of public hearings. The approval was later revoked after a successful appeal to the Federal court by the Sierra Legal Defense Fund on behalf of environmental organizations, including the Alberta Wilderness Association, Jasper Environmental Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Canadian Nature Federation, and the Pembina Institute. Another round of hearings resulted in approval being granted once again in April 2001, although by that time, Luscar Ltd. had announced that the mine would not proceed at that time due to low coal prices and the withdrawal of the commitment of a Japanese buyer for the coal (Sierra Legal Defense Fund 2000; Struzik 2002; Hryciuk 2000).

The Cheviot hearings created great animosity between those who supported the mine, including mine workers and the municipal government, and those who opposed it, including environmental organizations and some First Nation groups. Several respondents in this study reported that environmentalists in Hinton, the town where most of the miners live and where the hearings took place, were ostracized to a great extent during and after the hearings. The divisiveness of the Cheviot hearings has yet to be forgotten by residents of the Hinton region and was an important part of the context of the NES Strategy.

The Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy. The Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy (AFCS), completed in 1997, was to fulfill the commitments made by the Government of Alberta under the National Forest Strategy in 1994 (Semenchuk and Wallis 2002). The AFCS was a three year process that involved an "11-member multi-stakeholder steering committee, a stakeholder advisory group (representing over 60 stakeholder groups), urban and rural working groups, and strategic issues working groups" (Semenchuck and Wallis 2002, p.1). Members of the steering committee were nominated and acted on behalf of "governments, industry, environmental groups, recreational interests, and Aboriginal and academic communities" (Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy 1997). The AFCS called for significant changes in how activities would be planned and carried out in forest ecosystems, specifically requiring that forest ecosystems be given first consideration in all that transpires in the forest (Semenchuk and Wallis 2002). Strategic directions were articulated for five areas: ecological management, sustainable forest economy, protected areas, range of management intensities, and participation and partnership (ibid).

The steering committee submitted the AFCS document to the province but the Strategy was shelved, and the *Alberta Forest Legacy* was released by the provincial government instead (Schneider 2001). This failure of the government to accept the recommendations of the AFCS came as a surprise to some in the environmental community, "given the enormous effort that went into the process, and the consensus that was achieved" among the diverse group of stakeholders (ibid, p. 10). The major shift towards ecosystem management recommended by the AFCS has not occurred; rather, the core forest management policies of the province "remain unmodified," with sustained yield management continuing to be practiced (ibid). The failure of the government to adopt the recommendations of the AFCS created great frustration and disappointment on the part of many environmental organizations that had worked on the development of the strategy and created great distrust of multi-stakeholder policy development processes, the recommendations of which the Alberta government seemed willing to ignore.

Special Places 2000. The Special Places program was initiated in 1992 with the release of a draft policy document. The aim of the program was "to complete a network of protected areas to preserve the environmental diversity of the province's six natural regions and twenty sub-regions by the year 2000" (Alberta Environment 2001). After significant effort to solicit public input through "press releases and advertisements in area newspapers, open house information sessions, the establishment of a toll-free information line, and focus group interviews" (Stefanick and Wells 2000, p. 373-4), a public advisory committee, appointed by then Minister of Environmental Protection, Ty Lund, developed the 37 draft recommendations for the program, with the most important recommendation being that the primary goal of Special Places should be protection of the environment. After two years of consideration, the Minister released the final version of the Special Places document, described by Stefanick and Wells (2000) as more of "a multiple-use policy for public lands than a conservation policy" (p. 374). In this version of the document, economic development was also identified as an important goal of the Special Places program, a new and unwelcome theme for environmentalists (ibid). In response to this document, "all of Alberta's major [environmental] groups chose to boycott any further participation in the Special Places program", although some groups eventually did soften their stance and chose to participate in local Special Places processes (Stefanick and Wells 2000, p. 380).

The Special Places program worked as follows. A group or individual could nominate a site to be designated a "Special Place" under the program. Nominations for sites were reviewed by the Provincial Co-ordinating Committee (PCC), which was a representative body of various stakeholders including "local governments, industry, business, conservation, recreation, tourism, academic and scientific groups", appointed by the Minister of Environmental Protection (Stefanick and Wells 2000, p. 374). If approved by the PCC, then the Interdepartmental Committee (IC) (composed of cabinet ministers from the departments of Environmental Protection, Economic Development and Tourism, Agriculture Food and Rural Development, Energy, Community Development, Municipal Affairs) would check for consistency with existing policy and legislation. If approved by the Interdepartmental Committee, then the nomination would be returned to a local committee, established by the Ministers and based on recommendations of members from the municipality. The local committee's report would then be forwarded to the PCC and IC for a final review. If successful, the site was then referred for ministerial and cabinet approval, and, if granted, the site was established and management began (Stefanick and Wells 2000).

Stefanick and Wells (2000) document the case of one nominated Special Places site, the Castle-Crown area, which had previously been the site of a dispute over a proposed ski-hill and a protected wildland area. Once the Castle-Crown nomination made it to the local committee stage, the Provincial Co-ordinating Committee recommended the Municipal District of Pincher Creek establish a local committee. Given the recent controversy of land management in the area, some proponents of the Castle nomination worried that the Municipal District would not be unbiased in its selection of local committee members. The PCC also provided the local committee with guidelines for Terms of Reference, to which the local committee made some significant changes, including how participants would be selected and how consensus would be used. Initially, the Municipal District of Pincher Creek identified 28 groups whose interests should be represented on the local committee, but in the end only nine people were selected, with the mechanism for selection being a draw of names from a jar: "As luck would have it, no one representing an environmental group, including the original nominator of the Castle site, the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition, was invited to participate" (Stefanick and Wells 2000, p.381). The Municipal District also allowed for majority vote in cases where consensus could not be reached in the local committee's deliberations. The Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition eventually withdrew its nomination of the site, saying, "the local procedures of

Special Places 2000 are such that we think it might actually harm our efforts to protect the Castle Wilderness, not help them" (ibid, p. 382).

The Castle-Crown case is just one example of how environmental organizations found the Special Places program ultimately flawed. Other local committees decided to allow industrial activity to continue in designated sites (Edmonton Journal May 1, 1998), undermining the effectiveness of the program in the eyes of environmentalists. Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Special Places process—specifically the limited amount of land set aside for Special Places designation, the level of industrial activity that was allowed to continue in an area after it was named a Special Place, and the amount of discretion left in the hands of local committees-- prompted the withdrawal of support of ENGOs from the program (ibid), and, like in the case of the AFCS, resulted in great frustration for these groups with provincial environmental policy formation.

Environmental organizations were ultimately dissatisfied with the outcomes of all of these cases, feeling that in spite of the hearings and public involvement processes, "After all is said and done, all they've done is said" (Timoney and Lee 2001, p. 389). ENGOs skepticism regarding the provincial government's commitment to environmental protection was deepened by the fact that during roughly the same time period of these projects, the provincial government reduced the Ministry of Environment's budget by 31 per cent and cut 1550 staff positions (Muldoon and Nadarajah 1999).[3] These examples provide necessary background information to understand the context of the NES Strategy and the role that environmental organizations would play in the Strategy.

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[3] This reduction occurred from the time period 1993-2000.

The Involvement of Aboriginal Groups in Recent Land and Environmental Management Conflicts in Alberta

In the case of Aboriginal groups[4] in Alberta, there are a number of factors that make their inclusion in land and environmental planning processes like the NES Strategy complex. Aboriginal people of Alberta may be status or non-status Indians, depending on whether or not they are registered or are entitled to be registered according to the *Indian Act*, or Métis (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development 2001b). In addition to these classifications, Aboriginal people may also be members of a Band or First Nation, may live on or off reserve, and may be considered Treaty Indians if they are associated with a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown. Different rights apply to these different Aboriginal peoples (see Poitras-Collins 2001). In general, though, Aboriginal people have "Aboriginal rights", as recognized (though not defined) by the Canadian *Constitution Act* (1982). Aboriginal rights may include hunting, trapping and fishing on ancestral lands. Treaty Indians have "treaty rights" that are defined by specific treaties signed by the Crown and Aboriginal people (Treseder, Krogman, and Tough n.d.). Treaty rights may include reserve lands, gratuities, and hunting, trapping and fishing rights within Treaty areas (Treseder et al. n.d.).

Given that the Treaties were signed with the Crown, it is the responsibility of the federal government to manage "Indian Affairs", however, the natural resources that provide the basis for Aboriginal ways of life are managed by the province (Smith 1995). Thus, both federal and provincial governments have the duty to consult with Aboriginal peoples if a decision they are making is going to infringe on Aboriginal rights (Sharvit, Robinson, and Ross 1999). This split jurisdiction over Aboriginal issues related to natural resources has allowed the two levels of government to "pass the buck" and avoid addressing the concerns of Aboriginal people directly (Smith 1995).

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[4] I am using the terms "Aboriginal groups" and "Aboriginal communities" in this thesis intentionally, in order to refer to First Nations, Métis, and Non-status Indian groups in a concise manner. The use of these terms is not meant to in any way disrespect the unique status of these groups.

The interpretations of Aboriginal rights may vary between governments and Aboriginal groups, and disagreements over interpretations of rights may lead to litigation. Aboriginal people may make claims if they feel their Aboriginal or treaty rights have been violated. There are 58 Specific Claims and 19 Treaty Entitlement Claims that are either in negotiation, under review or pending in Alberta (Andres 2002). Treaty Entitlement Claims arise when the Crown has failed to fulfill obligations to Aboriginal peoples according to the Treaties, whereas Specific Claims are cases where the Crown has failed to fulfill its obligations to Aboriginal people as set out in the Indian Act (Indian and Northern Affairs 2002; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development 2001a). The Lubicon Lake Cree also have an outstanding land claim, which will be discussed more below. These ongoing claims consume valuable resources of aboriginal communities and complicate land use decisions as the outcome of claims may affect the rights of other stakeholders to use the land.

The context of Aboriginal groups' participation in policy-making in Alberta is further complicated by the great diversity of approaches to resource development on the part of the latter (Four Winds & Associates 2000). Some communities, and/or their leaders, are actively pursuing resource development for their communities in an attempt to increase employment levels and strengthen their local economies. Others are greatly concerned about the impacts of industrial development on the environment in which they live and their traditional ways of life. These varied approaches of Aboriginal groups were evident in the transcripts of the Aboriginal consultation meetings of the NES Strategy (Four Winds & Associates 2000; Four Winds & Associates 2002), where some groups were more vocal about their environmental concerns while others spoke predominantly about economic development concerns. In either case, conflicts between Aboriginal groups and government and/or industry have erupted in Alberta, in some cases where Aboriginal people are demanding their share of the benefits of resource development, in others where they are protesting the impacts of development on the lands they use and their traditional lifestyles (Smith 1995).

Perhaps the most well-known struggle of an Aboriginal group in Alberta is that of the unresolved land claim of the Lubicon Lake Cree. The Lubicon community of about 500 people, located about an hour east of Peace River, was "overlooked by federal Indian commissioners during their treaty negotiation foray into northern Alberta at the turn of the century" (Pratt and Urquhart 1994, p. 110). Since 1939, the Lubicon have been trying to negotiate their land claim with the federal government, with no success. When the Daishowa pulp mill was proposed, there was no mention of the Lubicon's unresolved land claim in the very region Daishowa would be logging. The provincial government initially set aside a 65 kilometer square area for the future reserve, an area much smaller than the 246 kilometers square the Lubicon were requesting and which completely ignored the issue of unextinguished Aboriginal land rights for a 10,400 kilometer square area in the region (Pratt and Urquhart 1994, p. 113).

The Lubicons were successful in gaining national and international public support for their cause, and eventually called for a boycott of the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics as well as threatening to take "direct action" to prevent logging from taking place in the disputed area (Pratt and Urquhart, p. 114, 115). In March 1988, in an effort to allow the Daishowa deal to proceed, Premier Getty met with the Lubicon leader, Chief Omniyak, promising to push for settlement of the land claim with the federal government. By October 15, however, with no significant progress having been made, the Lubicon took matters into their own hands and "assert[ed] jurisdiction over the entirety of their traditional territory" (Pratt and Urquhart 1994, p. 117). The checkpoints and barricades erected by the Lubicon stayed up for five days before the Royal Canadian Mounted Police tore them down and arrested 27 people. On October 22, the Premier, Chief Omniyak, and their advisors met again and negotiated the Grimshaw Agreement, which allotted 246 kilometers square for the future reserve but still did not address the unextinguished right to the Lubicon's traditional territory. The Grimshaw Agreement was shattered two years later when a group of men from the Lubicon area set fire to a local logging camp. In 1991, the Lubicon band initiated a boycott of Daishowa products and received letters of support from people in Germany, the United Kingdom, Australia and Denmark. A supporting organization, Friends of the Lubicon, claim that 26 companies, representing 2700 retail outlets, joined the boycott (Pratt and Urquhart 1994, p. 126). A series of lawsuits between Daishowa and Friends of the Lubicon regarding the legality of the boycott have followed since 1991. In 1998, the Lubicon entered negotiations with the federal government again but a final settlement has yet to be reached (Friends of the Lubicon n.d.).

The background on Aboriginal groups in Alberta provided in this section provides necessary information for understanding the involvement of Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy. The various rights of different Aboriginal people in Alberta, the varied approaches of different Aboriginal communities and leaders to resource development, and the outstanding Lubicon land claim and other Alberta bands' treaty entitlement and specific claims form an important part of the context of the NES Strategy.

Natural Resource and Environmental Management in the Alberta Context

The province of Alberta, Canada, is rich in many natural resources including oil, gas and bitumen and thousands of hectares of merchantable forests. The energy industry, including natural gas, crude oil, coal, sulphur and liquefied petroleum, is vital to the provincial economy, making up 20 percent of Alberta's 115.4 billion dollar GDP in 1999 (Economic Development 2000). Forestry made up only 2 percent of the provincial GDP in the same year but is still a key industry in the province in terms of employment, and certainly, in terms of contributing to cumulative effects on the land base.

Since the Leduc oil strike of 1947 and the allocation of Alberta's first

Forest Management Agreement in 1954, the province's petroleum and forestry industries have been developing steadily. As these industries developed and other land uses increased, demand for a land base for competing uses also increased. During the 1970s, an integrated resource planning process was developed, based on a multiple use policy and using zone designations to guide resource managers in allocating different uses in different areas (Kennett and Ross 1998). However, in 1995, during Ralph Klein's first tenure as Premier, regional land use planning was eliminated, leaving only broad provincial policies with local implementation to guide land management (Francis 2001; Urquhart 2001). The provincial government later came to realize that competing land uses and conflicts between land users were not adequately addressed through a combination of provincial-level policies and local implementation alone (Alberta Environment 2000). With the cumulative impacts of industrial developments becoming an increasing concern for land managers and users, regional planning was reintroduced in Alberta in 1999. The Northern East Slopes Strategy is one initiative launched by the provincial administration to address the need for regional level planning.

Description of the Northern East Slopes Strategy Process

As part of Alberta's effort to address cumulative impacts, the Integrated Resource Management Division of Alberta Environment was established on April 1, 1999 (Francis 2001). This new division launched the Northern East Slopes Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management Strategy (NES Strategy) in June 1999 as a pilot project for regional integrated resource management in the province

(Regional Steering Group 2001). The expected cost of the Strategy is between $1.5 to 2 million over three years (Alberta Environment n.d.). The Northern East Slopes region covers a vast area of 40,405 square kilometers of the northern east slopes of the Rocky Mountains (see Appendix I for map), where 71,000 people live (Regional Steering Group 2003b). Non-renewable resource extraction (i.e, oil, gas, coal) makes up 58 per cent of the region's economic activity (Regional Steering Group 2003c).

The terms of reference for the Strategy were developed by the Northern East Slopes Environmental Resource Committee[5] (ERC) and "key stakeholders" (Regional Steering Group 2001). Interview data suggest that representatives from the forestry and oil and gas industry were involved in creating the terms of reference for the Strategy. The expected products of the NES Strategy, listed in the Terms of Reference, include a regional vision for sustainable resource and environmental management including values, goals,[6] indicators, prioritized issues, strategies to address those issues and achieve stated goals, and a process to monitor, evaluate, report on and improve the NES Strategy (Regional Steering Group 2000). The vision, values, goals of the Strategy are listed in Appendix II. The indicators, prioritized issues, and strategic directions will be discussed briefly in the findings chapter of this thesis. The Terms of Reference also list the desired outcomes of the Strategy as:

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[5] The ERC consists of four Directors from Alberta Environment, one Director each from Resource Development, Agriculture Food and Rural Development, and Economic Development, as well as representatives of the EUB, Jasper National Park and Environment Canada (Francis 2001).

[6] The Regional Steering Group defined a value as "a principle, standard, or quality considered worthwhile or desirable" and a goal as "a broad, general statement that describes a desired state or condition related to one or more values" (Regional Steering Group 2001, p.11).

- Enhanced communication and cooperation among industries, communities, government and Aboriginal people;
- Clear strategic direction for managing resources in the region;
- Improved management of cumulative effects;
- Better understanding of the relationships between economic, environment, and community interest that are important for decision making within the region;
- Efficient, effective and consistent land management decisions, approvals and referrals;
- Identification of sub-regional and local planning priorities;
- Increased certainty with respect to development of the region's natural resources; and
- Community concerns are considered in resource development and environmental management decisions (Regional Steering Group 2000).

A Regional Steering Group (RSG) was assembled to function as the lead group in developing the Strategy. The RSG was to receive input from the public consultation forums and develop recommendations for the Strategy that would be presented to the Ministers responsible for sustainable resource and environmental management (Regional Steering Group 2001). Advertisements requesting applications from the public for Regional Steering Group positions were posted in weekly newspapers in the region and in Edmonton in April 2000 (Abells and Henry 2001). The ERC was responsible for recommending people to sit on the RSG to the Minister of Environment who would then make the final selection of Regional Steering Group members (Alberta Environment n.d.). The ERC received thirty-four applications; they interviewed twelve people, and recommended seven, all of whom were appointed by the Minister (Abells and Henry 2001). These seven individuals, plus one individual representing Aboriginal perspectives, made up the "Citizens-at-Large" portion of the Steering Group. Fred Munn, whose current employment is as Manager of Technical

Services for Cardinal River Coals and who acted as the Project Manager for the Cheviot Mine Project, acted as the sole chair of the RSG originally, and later co-chaired the committee with a government member (Regional Steering Group 2001). Given the controversy over the Cheviot Mine Project, the selection of Munn as chair of the RSG was no doubt interpreted by environmentalists as a pro-development bias of the Strategy.

Aboriginal representatives were recruited through a separate process (Abells and Henry 2001). There was one Aboriginal individual who was consistently involved in the RSG. At one point, another individual was part of the Steering Group but did not continue to attend meetings regularly and was asked to resign their seat on the RSG. At an early stage of the development of the Strategy, a third seat for an Aboriginal person was offered to an aboriginal association that had insisted on having representation on the RSG. This group, however, declined the offer of a seat when it was eventually made. Aboriginal involvement in the RSG will be discussed in greater detail later in the thesis.

There were also six government representatives sitting on the RSG, one representing local government, one federal government representative and one representative each from the provincial departments of Environment, Sustainable Resource Development, Agriculture Food and Rural Development, and Economic Development (see Appendix III for a complete list of original RSG members).

Applicants for Citizens-at-large positions on the RSG were reportedly selected based on their leadership qualities, knowledge, skills and experience in resource, community and environmental management (Abells and Henry 2001).

A government respondent interviewed in this study stated they were also evaluated on their ability to take a regional perspective, whether or not they were directly affected by a decision that would be made in the region, and their willingness to work in a consensus-based decision-making process. The make-up of the RSG was a point of contention for many respondents in this study and will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis.

Stakeholders in the NES Strategy area were identified in the Terms of Reference as the four provincial departments responsible for Integrated Resource Management,[7] municipal and federal governments, industry, communities of interest and/or geographical area, and Aboriginal peoples[8] (Regional Steering Group 2001). These identified stakeholders were to be consulted multiple times through the course of the Strategy through general public consultations and targeted consultations as will be discussed more below. A separate process for consultation was designed for Aboriginal groups. The involvement of Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations in the Strategy will be discussed in greater detail in the Findings and Discussion chapters of this thesis.

The desired outcomes of the consultation processes, as listed in the Terms of Reference, were:

- To identify and understand the perspective and concerns of citizens and communities in the Northern East Slopes area,
- To obtain advice and input that will expand the information and the options upon which decisions are based,

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[7] The responsible departments are Sustainable Resource Development; Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Environment; and Economic Development (Regional Steering Group 2001).
[8] One government respondent in this study pointed out that, while integrated resource management itself may not be new in Alberta, the Northern East Slopes initiative was new in that it sought meaningful Aboriginal consultation and involvement in the process. Aboriginal consultation was not emphasized in the early Integrated Resource Plans.

- To anticipate potential problems and address them before conflicts arise through ongoing public consultation,
- To maximize the benefits and minimize the costs of proposed changes by consulting citizens and communities, and
- To promote awareness and understanding with the general public by creating opportunities to learn about and participate in public involvement processes (Regional Steering Group 2000).

The following is a brief outline of the timeline and events of the NES Strategy. A newsletter on the NES Strategy was distributed to a list of 450 individuals and organizations, developed by the NES Strategy project manager, who were identified as interested in the NES Strategy and provincial initiatives. This initial mail-out was to introduce the Strategy to the public and generate interest in the upcoming first round of public consultations. The first phase of consultations, October-November 2000, was designed to get feedback on the vision, values and goals the Regional Steering Group had developed. Targeted stakeholder consultations were held with the forestry, oil and gas, agriculture and tourism industries; environmental organizations; federal, provincial and local government employees; and Aboriginal groups. As well, general public consultation meetings were held in numerous communities in the NES area (Regional Steering Group 2001). For a complete list of meetings conducted in the first phase of consultations, see Appendix IV.

The general public consultation meetings were open to anyone who cared to attend and were advertised through the local media and by direct mail to 1400 people on a mailing list developed by the NES Project Manager. Phone calls were also made to remind people on the list of upcoming meetings (Regional Steering Group 2001).

For the targeted consultations, invitations were sent to individuals from specific groups like industry, ENGOs or local government employees on the NES mailing list, which was maintained by the NES project manager. According to a government respondent of this study, these individuals were asked to ensure that other persons from that sector or group who were interested in attending the meeting were also notified and invited. As well, anyone who requested to participate in the meeting would also be invited to attend. Despite these apparent attempts to ensure that all interested parties from a sector or group were invited to the meeting, these meetings may still be considered closed for the most part as only people on the NES project manager's list or connected to someone on the list would likely know of the meeting and thus be in the position to ask for an invitation to attend. These closed meetings would be attractive to industry representatives, as they would have a private forum in which to benefit from direct influence with government officials while being protected from public scrutiny of their positions (Adkin 1998).

Participants in this first phase of consultations provided comments on the draft vision, values and goals statements, either verbally in the meeting and/or in written format using a questionnaire provided by the consultation facilitators. Written transcripts of both the verbal and written comments were compiled and sent back to volunteers from each meeting who verified the accuracy of the transcript (Regional Steering Group 2001). Follow-up focus group sessions were held after the RSG had revised the vision, values and goal statements, taking into account the comments received during consultation. The overall reaction of the focus groups was reported by the Regional Steering Group to be positive and it was recognized that changes had been made that reflected the comments made in the consultation meetings (Regional Steering Group 2001).

An Interim report summarizing the work of the RSG and the first round of consultations was submitted to the Minister of Environment January 2001. The provincial election in March 2001 resulted in some delays for the NES Strategy, in part due to a major reorganization of government departments that followed the election.

Task Teams consisting of government and public members were established in December 2001, just before the second round of consultations began, to focus on the biophysical, economic and social aspects of the Strategy (see Appendix V for a listing of task team members). Membership in the Task Teams was more inclusive than membership in the Regional Steering Group, being open to any individuals who showed sincere interest in participating in the work of the Task Team. The Task Teams focused on gathering data to be used in assessments of the current state of environmental and economic conditions, and important cultural issues in the region. This data would be used in models to do trade-off analyses for different management scenarios. An Aboriginal Task Team was also formed to focus more specifically on aboriginal involvement in the Strategy and issues of concern for aboriginal people in the NES region.

The second phase of consultations took place over January and February of 2002. This phase focused on collecting responses to the list of local (or operational), regional, and provincial level issues of natural resource and environmental management that the Regional Steering Group had compiled and the prioritization of these issues. Again, targeted consultations, broad public consultations, and Aboriginal consultations were held. For a complete list of meetings that took place in the second phase of the Strategy, see Appendix VI.

In addition to these consultation phases, two telephone surveys were conducted for the Strategy, the first in August 2001, and the second in July 2002. Both surveys sampled 400 adults in the NES area, asking respondents about their awareness of the NES Strategy and their responses to statements from the Strategy (Integrated Resource Management 2002a; Integrated Resource Management 2001b). The surveys were conducted as a supplement to the responses from the targeted and public consultation meetings and to gauge the broader public's perception of the need for integrated resource management in the region.

The RSG decided to cancel the third round of public consultations that were scheduled for the fall of 2002 in order to focus on developing strategies to address the issues that had been identified as priorities (Integrated Resource Management 2002a). The original deadline for the final report of the Strategy was late 2002 but this deadline has been postponed. At the time of writing (May 2003) a draft of the final recommendations of the Strategy has been completed, and public response to the document is being solicited. Public meetings were held in ten communities in the region between March 24 and April 1, 2003 (Regional Steering Group 2003d). An on-line document is also available for submitting responses to the draft recommendations. Once the draft is revised, the final document will be submitted to the Minster of Environment for approval (Regional Steering Group 2003d).

It should be noted that the draft recommendations, along with an overview document and media release, were posted on the Integrated Resource Management website on March 26, 2003, according to the date of the last update on the website. The media release, which announced the release of the draft recommendations, is dated March 14, 2003. It is possible that notices of these final meetings were sent out to individuals on the project manager's mailing list in advance of this date, but any individuals finding out about the release of the draft recommendations from the general media release or the internet would have had little or no time to prepare for the public meetings which were held March 24 through April 1.

The Northern East Slopes Strategy has spanned over four years and involved two phases of targeted and public consultation processes, including a specialized approach for Aboriginal involvement. It sought to develop management strategies that would allow economic, environmental and social values to exist together with less conflict, an ambitious goal in a region familiar with multiple land use conflicts. While it is too early to evaluate the final product of the Strategy or its implementation, this thesis will explore the involvement of two key stakeholder groups in the NES Strategy-- environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups-- to evaluate the quality of their involvement and ways in which their participation could be enhanced in future regional strategies. The draft recommendations will also be briefly assessed to determine whether the quality of involvement of these two groups affected the initial outcomes of the NES Strategy.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Introduction

The essential question being addressed in this thesis is how a government incorporates conflicting social priorities in the management of its natural resources and environment. In a democracy, it is assumed that the opportunity to participate in decisions will be widely shared among all adult citizens (Mason 1999). Calls for the increased involvement of various societal groups in resource and environmental decision-making can be attributed to a movement towards a more participatory form of democracy as a result of dissatisfaction with representative democracy. Increased demands for participation can also be seen as the transference of responsibility from government to non-governmental groups that is characteristic of the downsizing of the role of government under neo-liberal policies. This thesis will look specifically at the involvement of Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations in a specific policy process in Alberta. Both of these groups are widely seen as having legitimate reasons to be involved in resource and environmental decision-making.

In this literature review, I will explore the concept of network governance, with particular focus on Evans' (1995) work on embedded autonomy, and the reasons for the emergence of network governance. As well, I will review policy network literature, drawing from Hessing and Howlett's (1997) work on Canada's natural resource and environmental policy arena, and with an emphasis on the roles that Aboriginal groups and environmental groups have played in Canada's policy network. I will also review other social theory that provides insight into the inclusion and exclusion of actors from policy networks, and criteria for meaningful public involvement processes as put forth in public participation literature.

Network Governance

Network governance has generated a lot of interest in organizational theory that focuses on firms and the business environment (Calton and Ladd 1995). Nohria and Eccles (1992) argue that firms that have adopted network models of organization, with lateral and horizontal linkages within and among firms, have had competitive success over those firms with more hierarchical structures.

The concept of network governance has also been applied to state-society relations. Observations in public policy making literature of network governance as a political structure date back to the late 1960s and increase in frequency in the 1980s (Kenis and Schneider 1991). Network governance sees state agencies developing close links with an increasing number of societal groups while still maintaining bureaucratic autonomy. These state-society linkages are considered to be emerging in response to the increasing complexity of policy problems, the increasing capacity of civil society to play a role in policy making, and a shift in state structures towards decentralization and privatization. As well, the more horizontal arrangements of network governance are seen as the means to overcome “the social frigidity, information constipation, and routinized lethargy in hierarchies” (Calton and Ladd 1995, p. 273). Network arrangements, as an alternative to market transactions and hierarchical governance, are thought by some to be the optimal arrangement for addressing complex problems in society, as they are more flexible than traditional hierarchical arrangements and are able to draw on expertise from societal groups (Calton and Ladd 1995).

Though not always using the label 'network governance,' many recent commentators on political organization have noted these changes in state-society relations. Evans' (1995) writing on "embedded autonomy" was instrumental in exploring the idea of network governance. The starting point for this work was a desire to explore the potential positive contributions of the state to development and counter claims by neo-utilitarian, or neo-liberal, market theorists that the role of the state should be kept as minimal as possible, allowing market forces to foster development[9] (Evans 1996). The main argument of Evans' work is that the state can play a fundamental role in fostering industrial transformation if it has what Evans terms "embedded autonomy." Evans (1996) explains the necessity of embedded autonomy as follows:

> Internal cohesiveness without connectedness cannot deliver because it lacks both the necessary intelligence about what can be done and allies to help with implementation. Without internal cohesiveness, connectedness becomes the basis of capture and disarray rather than a source of intelligence and implementation (p. 263).

In other words, Evans sees embeddedness, or connectedness between the state and societal groups, as necessary to have quality information in the development of policy and for the success of its implementation. Autonomy, or internal cohesiveness of the state bureaucracy, is necessary to prevent the state from being captured by societal actors.

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[9] Neo-utilitarian political economists argue that state bureaucracies either strangle entrepreneurship or have the effect of diverting it into unproductive "rent-seeking" activities (Evans 1995). This is according to rational choice models that suggest incumbents will distribute resources in a manner to maintain public support, and not for the public good. An inherent assumption here is that these two ends conflict. Thus, neo-liberal theorists suggest that since it would be irrational for states to act on the part of the public good, the role of the state should be limited to "protecting individual rights, persons and property, and enforcing voluntarily negotiated private contracts" (Evans 1995, p.25), allowing the market to play its "proper" role in development.

Evans uses the case of post-WWII South Korea as an example of a state whose structures "approximate the ideal type" of embedded autonomy. Evans argues that Korea's state bureaucracy had the necessary autonomy to foster development, that is, it was separate enough from societal ties that it could still resolve collective action problems. Its exceptionally capable state bureaucratic apparatus used meritocratic recruitment methods for the public service-- that is, recruitment based on merit rather than patronage-- and offered career rewards comparable to those in the private sector (Evans 1998). These elements of the state bureaucracy are seen by Evans as being key in maintaining competitiveness with the private sector for attracting bright, capable people into the public service.

In addition to a robust bureaucracy, Evans argues that Korea's close ties with entrepreneurs were essential for the success of Korea's information technology sector. This societal embeddedness was seen as necessary in order to foster trust in government agencies on the part of these entrepreneurs and to garner support for policies. It was also essential to ensure a flow of information between the private sector and government, without which, state agencies would have lacked quality information on which to base their policies. This embeddedness was actively created by state agencies through joint meetings between government personnel and entrepreneurs; conferences that brought together business leaders, academics, and government technocrats; and collaborative research and development projects (Evans 1998).

Ironically, Evans suggests that the success of embedded autonomy seems to produce the conditions for its own undoing. Once established, a strong "entrepreneurial class much less amenable to being prodded by the state" will start to adopt the ideology of getting government out of business and begin to dismantle the conditions of embedded autonomy that made their success possible in the first place (Evans 1998). This was the case with Korea's information technology sector. Not only did capital want the role of government diminished, because they felt they no longer needed the state's assistance, but labour also supported restricting the role of government because they had only ever experienced state repression. Evans sees this outcome resulting from the fact that the Korean state only developed network connections with a small set of entrepreneurs, while relations with rest of society were characterized by repression and exclusion.

To avoid this outcome, Evans (1996) suggests that "the institutionalized networks that connect state and society must be broadened to include an array of counterbalancing social groups" (p. 277). Doing this would give subordinate groups a stake in preserving state capacity, as the state would no longer be seen simply as a source of repression. Capital would also view the state as more useful in this situation since they will need a dependable arena for bargaining with labour once these groups can no longer be marginalized or ignored.

Why is Network Governance Emerging?

Literature on policy networks, civil society, and environmental conflict points to reasons for the emergence of network governance arrangements and for the increasing involvement of other societal groups in networks for governance. These reasons include changes in the nature of policy problems, in civil society, and in the role of government.

Changes in the Nature of the Problems

Policy problems that states face today are generally considered to be more complex than before (Calton and Ladd 1995). Particularly with regard to natural resource and environmental management problems, there are several factors adding to the complexity of policy formation. The interaction between a large number of variables in these cases, which may change from one problem to the next, makes relationships hard to identify and understand (Patterson and Williams 1998). Environmental conflicts are highly complex because they often involve multiple parties, multiple issues, cultural differences, deeply held values and worldviews, scientific and traditional knowledge, and legal requirements (Daniels and Walker 2001).

Ulrich Beck (1992), in his work on risk society, also argues the case of increasing complexity, specifically by asserting that the risks human populations are facing today are different than risks faced by previous generations. Current risks, Beck (1992) suggests, are different in three respects. First of all, Beck argues that the scale of risk is bigger today, with potentially global consequences of events like global warming or nuclear accidents. These modern risks are compared to severe storms that would hit a certain region or a factory or part of a city burning down in earlier times. Beck also asserts that the form of risk is different. Today, human populations are facing creeping problems that may be difficult to detect and that have no real end point. The example of toxic waste seeping into groundwater in comparison to a tornado illustrates this difference in form. As well, Beck suggests that the origin of risk has changed. Whereas risk used to be seen as fate or nature taking its course, current risks are seen to have human origins. Beck's (1992) arguments that current risks differ in scale, form and origin also support the claim of the increasing complexity of policy problems.

Cumulative effects are a good example of this new complexity in problems that states and publics are facing. Considered "emergent properties" of a system, cumulative effects "occur (or are apparent) only at the scale of the entire system" (Daniels and Walker 2001, p.107). Cumulative effects are defined as the "impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action…when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions" (Kennett 1999, p.2). Addressing cumulative effects is a complex undertaking given that these impacts may take place over large geographic areas, after significant time lags, in a context of the interaction of multiple variables. Cumulative effects fit Beck's (1992) criteria of modern risk given their large scale, their creeping or emergent form, and their human origin. Thus solutions to complex problems, like cumulative effects, must address the system as a whole as reductionist methods that break a system down into its parts are not adequate to deal with such complex problems. Network governance may be an appropriate arrangement to address complex problems like cumulative effects.

As a result of this "increased complexity of social and political affairs" there is an impetus for new forms of government to evolve that are less hierarchical and rigid, and more horizontal in order to facilitate information exchange and coordination efforts (Considine and Lewis 1999). The collaboration of the state with other actors is increasingly considered necessary as "many people are beginning to believe that important issues of public concern, such as environmental issues…are too complex to be addressed by government acting alone" (Plumptre and Graham 1999).

Changes in Civil Society

The late 1960s witnessed the emergence of organized civil society where a number of 'interest' groups other than industry and labour began to take shape, including environmental, civil rights, and feminist organizations (Kenis and Schneider 1991). Rosenau (1997) argues that both a "skills revolution" and an "associational revolution," along with advances in microelectronic technologies, like the Internet and fax machine, have enabled individuals and organizations to have greater participation in policy decision-making (p. 278). With the development of civil society, "executive agencies were no longer the sole sources of knowledge and information in the [policy] system" (Lindquist 1992, p.130). Indeed, non-state actors are being called on to "[play] roles, [meet] expectations, and [fill] gaps that national governments cannot fill on their own….[R]ather than take the place of governments, non-state actors are helping them to do their jobs better in an increasingly complex and fragmented environment" (Rosenau 1997).

On a global scale, the growing importance of civil society has been evident in the past decade. An article from the *Economist*, quoted in Adkin (2003), lists the success of NGOs at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 in pushing through agreements on controlling greenhouse gases; of a coalition of consumer rights activists and environmentalists in defeating the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) in 1998; and of the Jubilee 2000 coalition that pushed successfully for a dramatic reduction in the debts of the poorest countries (p. 404).[10] Another example of the increasingly significant role civil society plays in policy making was seen at a London Dumping Convention when the small Pacific island state of Naaru, unable to afford to send its own delegates to the international meeting, decided to give its seats to two American environmentalists instead (Rosenau 1997, p.335).

The so-called "anti-globalization" movement has been witnessed in Alberta as well. In June of 2000, protests were held in Calgary during the World Petroleum Congress, and two years later the G6B People's Summit was held in Calgary as a counter-summit to the G8 Summit taking place in Kananaskis (Adkin 2003, p. 413, 414).

On a smaller scale, the increased activity of civil society can also be seen in the increasing frequency of Public Advisory Groups across Canada on various policy issues, like Weldwood's Forest Resource Advisory Group. While not a decision-making body, the group of 20 members from various stakeholder groups suggests issues for Weldwood to address, recommends actions or policies for the company to take (Weldwood of Canada Limited n.d.), and is considered the voice for local public concerns. In the late 1980s, Alberta saw the formation of close to twenty forestry-oriented environmental groups in reaction to the pulp and paper mills that were being developed at that time (Pratt and Urquhart 1994). Currently, the Alberta Environmental Network Society directory currently lists 170 ENGOs, and over 50 NGOs with a non-environmental focus (Alberta Environmental Network Society 2003).

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[10] See the Appendix of Adkin (2003) for a more complete list of recent mobilizations against neoliberal globalization.

These examples all demonstrate the growing role of civil society in policy processes in Alberta and globally since the 1960s. However, many would argue that the ability of and opportunities for civil society to influence outcomes is in fact being restricted as a result of growing social inequalities, unemployment, insecure employment, concentration of media ownership, and the many effects of market discipline. Smith (2001) suggests that a more active citizenship emerged in Alberta in the 1980s and 90s, but that the impact of these more active citizens may have been "cut short with the triumph of [the neo-liberal discourse] of customers over citizens" (p. 299). Smith (2001) quotes Janine Brodie who argues that this discourse

> marks the ascendancy of the market over the state and inside the state and, thereby, atrophies the public, closes political spaces, and further marginalizes the already marginalized…those very groups most likely to challenge the growing social inequalities that restructuring is creating (p. 299).

In the Alberta case, there is indeed much anecdotal evidence of public servants feeling unable to speak out against budget cuts in the social services for fear of losing their positions. Harrison (1995a) says this fear is based in reality: in

1994, Mike Cardinal, then Minister of Social Services, issued a warning that social workers who spoke against government policies would be fired (p. 124). A more recent example of the consequences of speaking out is the case of Dr. David Swann. After Swann, the medical officer of health for the Palliser Health Authority, spoke out in favor of the Kyoto Accord--to which the province was keenly opposed-- the Palliser Health Authority received a phone call from Alberta Environment Minister, Lorne Taylor. Swann was fired shortly thereafter, and, although Taylor denied having anything to do with Swann's firing, many (including Swann) viewed the incident as evidence of political interference (Macleans 2002).

Thus, the growing trends of public consultation must be viewed in balance with these other trends in neoliberal regimes. This situation constitutes a dual movement in which consultative processes may have expanded, but actual influence (in shaping outcomes) may have declined. A weakness of network governance theory, then, is its emphasis on the increase in consultative processes without consideration of the limiting factors neo-liberal environments place on the ability of citizens to meaningfully participate with a reasonable expectation of shaping the outcome.

Changes in the Role of Government

The past few decades have also seen state structures moving towards decentralization and fragmentation, and the privatization of public services and contracting-out of work on a more regular basis (Considine and Lewis 1999). These trends are part of a desire to "'reinvent government' in leaner and more efficient forms" (Singleton 2000) as senior officials strive to "find alternative ways to deliver programs and meet policy objectives with less budgetary and personnel resources" (Lindquist 1992, p. 128; also Plumptre and Graham 1999). From this perspective, then, though heralded as the ultimate form of governance to manage complex problems in today's world, a less optimistic explanation for the emergence of network governance would be that it stems as much from efforts at cost-cutting as it does from efforts at problem solving.

Network Governance and Ecological Modernization

Reflections of the idea of network governance can also be found in ecological modernization literature. Ecological modernization, which has been most successful in social democratic corporatist contexts, like Northern Europe, and has been most resisted in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and North America (Adkin 2003, p. 415), suggests that "institutional changes" are needed to improve ecological outcomes, including strengthening the "role of nongovernmental organizations" (Fisher and Freudenburg 2001). Other changes of ecological modernization will include the role of government shifting from "curative and reactive to preventative, from 'closed' policy making to participative policy making, from centralized to decentralized, and from dirigistic to contextually 'steering'" (Mol 1992). Ecological modernization theory also suggests that there will be an increasing role of market dynamics and economic agents in ecological restructuring as a conservationist or efficiency rationale permeates corporate practices in society as well (Mol and Sonnenfeld 2000).

The role of social movements will also evolve, according to ecological modernization theorists, as social movement groups become more involved in public and private decision-making institutions regarding environmental reforms, rather than remaining critics on the periphery (Mol and Sonnenfeld 2000). As well, the ideology of social movement groups will shift from anti-systemic and demodernization ideologies to reformist ideologies, with those groups who maintain more radical views being pushed to the periphery of policy processes (ibid). Ecological modernization suggests that trends of network governance will increase as modern societies' political institutions, markets and societal groups all transform to better incorporate an 'ecological rationale' in public policies.

Network Governance and Public Participation

Public participation literature makes a case for greater involvement of societal groups in decision-making and, in this way, also supports the notion of network governance. The evolving forms of public participation over the past several years have seen an expansion in public consultation processes that have moved away from largely one-way communication modes of "open-houses" towards multi-way communication forums like public advisory groups. As noted earlier, this increase in public involvement and the emerging methods of public consultation may not result in greater public control over policy outcomes as these trends are countered by various elements of market liberal regimes.

There is a clear justification in policy process literature for public involvement in resource and environmental policy decision-making. Perhaps the most cited reason for citizen involvement is that the success of a policy depends on public support and the more involved the public is in the policy making process, the more likely it is to support the policy (Moffet 1996; Chess and Purcell 1999; Mangun and Henning 1999; Tanz and Howard 1991). Research on public participation in policy making also shows that decisions made with public input are often of higher quality than those made solely by state agencies (Beierle and Konisky 1999; Chess and Purcell 1999). This may be due to the nature of the knowledge held by local people that can help design policies that are appropriate for the unique circumstance of a particular location. As well, involving the public at large "forces consideration of all different interests for making well-balanced and comprehensive decisions" (Mangun and Henning 1999; Beierle and Konisky 1999).

Numerous other reasons for involving the public in policy making are also cited in the literature. Public participation may result in a more informed and educated public (Beierle and Konisky 1999; Chess and Purcell 1999) and higher levels of trust in government (Beierle and Konisky 1999)-- depending on the outcome, as the previous chapter on context observed. As well, resource and environmental decision-making are seen by some as including a mixture of science and value judgments; therefore, a wide range of stakeholders should be involved to ensure that no one set of values dominates the policy process (Moffet 1996).

Tanz and Howard (1991) also point out that, pragmatically, it is simply no longer possible to manage public resources without meaningfully involving the public. To attempt to do so often results in negative outcomes such as the litigation or gridlock that characterize much environmental decision-making (Beierle and Konisky 1999). Legalistic approaches to policy change are an alternative for groups who are outside of a closed policy process (Wellstead 1996). Both Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations have had successful outcomes in the courts, a precedent that gives these groups greater power when next negotiating with government or industry.[11] In addition to legal victories, with an increasing ability for ENGOs and Aboriginal groups to quickly mobilize public support, consumer boycotts can be successful in achieving policy objectives. This was the case in British Columbia (BC) where ENGOs brought international attention to BC's forest industry practices and organized boycotts of BC forest products in key export markets. Under this pressure, the forest industry did not oppose the proposal of the New Democrat Party government to create the Forest Practices Code (Howlett and Rayner 1995). Thus, it is increasingly necessary for groups like environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups to be meaningfully involved in policy processes in order to avoid negative publicity, lengthy court battles, and potentially damaging consumer boycotts.

All of these bodies of literature—network governance, ecological modernization, and public involvement-- point towards the increasing need to meaningfully involve various societal groups in resource and environmental decision-making. However, involving groups who have not traditionally been involved in policy making may be easier said than done. A review of policy network literature will help to clarify why environmental groups and Aboriginal groups have traditionally been excluded from policy networks, and will explore why their involvement may be increasing, as well as some of the remaining barriers to their participation.

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[11] Litigation does not come without risks for these groups. After a court challenge of the legality of the Daishowa Forest Management Agreement (FMA), the three environmental organizations who had contested Daishowa's rights to log were ordered to pay $77,000 to the provincial government and Daishowa to cover court costs (Pratt and Urquhart 1994). One of the environmental organizations, the Alberta Wilderness Association, had previously experienced a significant cut in the amount of funding they received from a provincial foundation (ibid). Thus, the potential of reimbursing their adversaries for court costs in the case of a failed legal challenge and the risk of having funding cut from provincial sources may pose very real deterrents to legal action for some groups.

Theory on Policy Networks

Much work has been done in the field of public policy to examine the configurations of actors in the development of policy. This section will review literature on Canada's policy networks around land and environmental management, the exclusion of non-productive interests from the policy network, "opting out" as a strategy of some actors, and the involvement of Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations in Canada's policy networks. I will begin with brief definitions of network, network analysis, and policy network, followed by the introduction of Hessing and Howlett's (1997) taxonomy of policy networks.

The term 'network' has been broadly defined as simply "the structure of ties among the actors of a social system" (Calton and Ladd 1995, p. 273). A narrower definition that applies more specifically to the concept of network governance is that a network is a "new ideal type of organization that is radically different from the Weberian bureaucracy...and is characterized by relations that are based on neither hierarchical authority nor market transactions" (ibid).

Network analysis is "a broad strategy" to investigate conceptualizations of social structure in the form of networks (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). The starting point for network analysis is an "anticategorical imperative that rejects all attempts to explain human behaviour or social processes solely in terms of the categorical attributes of actors" (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). Instead of assigning actors to categories, network analysts consider the position of the actor in the network and the relations among actors as the key to explaining individual behaviour. That is, the actions of a member of a labour union, for example, are thought to be better explained by considering the actor's position in relation to other actors as influenced by their membership in the union than by simply categorizing the individual as a union member.

Hessing and Howlett (1997) define a policy *network* as a subset of a policy *community*. A policy community is a diffuse group of many actors who share common policy knowledge. A policy network is a subset of the larger policy community where members are bound by common material interests. Relevant industries, labour unions and government agencies, with their shared material interests, would be part of natural resource policy networks, while environmentalists and consumers would only be part of the larger policy community, according to Hessing and Howlett.

In their taxonomy of policy networks, Hessing and Howlett (1997) categorize network formations based on the number and type of participants represented in the network and whether the network is state dominated or society dominated (summarized in Table 1). The *bureaucratic network* is an extreme case where the principal interactions between subsystem members take place exclusively within the state, that is, there are no societal groups in the network. Examples of this type of network can be found around issues like national security and defense, or the siting of nuclear power plants. An *issue network* is the opposite extreme case, where the principal interactions take place between a large number of societal actors. Typically, business and productive interests are the primary actors in this category though this is not necessarily the case.

The six other network classifications lie between the two extremes. *Participatory networks* are those where state agencies play a strong role but are dominated by a diffuse set of societal actors. An example of this type of network would be planning issues in national parks. *Pluralist networks* involve many societal actors but are dominated by state actors, an example being environmental round tables. *Clientelistic networks* are cases where there is only one major

Table 1: A Taxonomy of Policy Networks

State/Societal relations within network	**Number/Type of network participants**			
	State agencies group	*One major societal group*	*Two major societal groups*	*Three or more*
State directed	Bureaucratic network	Clientelistic network	Triadic network	Pluralistic network
Society dominated	Participatory network	Captured network	Corporatist network	Issue network

Source: Hessing and Howlett 1997

societal actor, usually a business interest, but, again, the network is dominated by the state. An example of this type of network would be with regard to issues of Aboriginal peoples, where Aboriginal groups are the only major societal actor involved, but the network is still dominated by the state. *Captured networks* see only one major societal actor-- again, usually a business interest-- but in this case, the societal actor dominates the network. Hessing and Howlett suggest that the regulation of pulp pollution-- where industry traditionally has had strong involvement-- is an example of a captured network. A *triadic network* is one where two strong societal actors face the state but the state is dominant, an example being the development of the Protected Area Strategy in British Columbia where wilderness protection groups worked with the forest industry to form a triadic network with government. The final network formation in the taxonomy is the *corporatist network* in which, again, there are two societal groups in the network but where the societal groups dominate the state. The example given by Hessing and Howlett for this network formation is where business and the Native fishery interests work together against the state in establishing fishery quotas.

Hessing and Howlett (1997) argue that identifying the network formation is important for understanding policy formulation because the identification of policy options that will be seriously considered "is largely a function of the nature and motivation of key actors arrayed in the subsystem" (p. 90).

Canada's Natural Resource and Environmental Management Policy Networks

In reviewing Canadian natural resource and environmental policy subsystems, Hessing and Howlett (1997) conclude that these subsystems can take the form of anything from an iron triangle, where there is iron-clad control over the policy process by a select and unchanging group of actors, to an issue network where various groups may be involved in the policy process and their power may fluctuate over time. The former alludes to corporatist style arrangements while the latter resembles pluralist governance structures.

In corporatist or neo-corporatist[12] forms of governance, policy-making involves a limited number of participants who are generally hierarchically organized. These groups are "granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports" (Schmitter in Downes 1996, para. 7). Typically corporatist arrangements include only the state and major economic producer groups, namely industry and labour (Salazar and Alper 1996). The inclusion of these groups is considered necessary to deal with the class conflicts inherent to advanced capitalism. The classic work on corporatism is Dahrendorf's (1979) writings on Germany's industrial democracy, where the 'iron triangle' of labour, industry and state formed a closed system of policy making. Harrison (1995a) asserts that corporatism is an "apt description of how State-civil relations are today structured in Alberta" (p. 118), but asserts that right-wing corporatism in Alberta involves only the state-private sector relationship, excluding labour and other "interest" groups.

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[12] Neo-corporatism, according to Downes (1996), refers to corporatist arrangements within modern liberal democracies and does not assume dominance of the state. This is in contrast to the corporatism of the prewar fascist states of Italy and Germany.

In his study of the Australian Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) Process, Downes (1996) suggests that the traditional members of iron-triangle type arrangements may be expanded to include non-economic[13] based interest organizations, such as environmental organizations. Environmental groups were included in Australia's ESD process as the government sought to "minimize conflict in the environmental area and 'to manage the unpredictable elements of increased environmental concern so as to preserve the maximum continuity of existing economic activity'" (Downes 1996, para. 10). While these organizations may not have a functional relationship to the production process, they have demonstrated the potential to disrupt that process which is enough to warrant their inclusion in a neo-corporatist arrangement. Downes specifies that environmental groups in this case were involved in neo-corporatist interest intermediation but were not involved in the actual policy formulation and implementation, indicating there were still limits on the level of their involvement despite their ability to disrupt production processes.

Network governance proponents argue, like Downes, that traditional corporatist arrangements between the state, capital and labour are no longer satisfactory as many other groups, like the environmental groups in Australia, have gained sufficient power and possess the necessary skills to be involved in policy making (Zito and Egan 1998). This inclusion of societal groups like environmental organizations in policy networks lends support to the argument of Touraine, as summarized by Adkin (1998), that the main conflict in "post-industrial" society is no longer between industrial workers and capitalists, struggling over control of the means of production and the appropriation of the product, but between "citizens and technocrats" who are vying for control over social-decision making (p.3).

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[13] Downes (1996) and others writing on corporatist arrangements identify capital and labour as economic organizations whose primary goal is economic development. These are the groups traditionally included in corporatist arrangements with government.

On the other end of the spectrum of network formations presented by Hessing and Howlett (1997) are issue networks. Issue networks resemble pluralist forms of governance in that they are open systems in which multiple players can be involved and "power is assumed to be widely, if not equally, distributed among groups within a society" (Salazar and Alper 1996). The key concept of pluralism, as conceptualized by Robert Dahl, is that organized interest groups compete for influence by lobbying the government (Whitt 1982). The government's role in this structure is that of a moderator or referee between the competing interests (Salazar and Alper 1996). Rather than exclusive negotiations between select interest organizations, as occurred in Australia's ESD process, pluralist processes are open, competitive arrangements of interest negotiations (Downes 1996).

Network governance contrasts with pluralism in that the actors in network governance arrangements are not just pressure groups simply "attempt[ing] to sway governments;" rather they act "to ameliorate directly the lives of those whose interests they represent before governments" (Rosenau 1997, p.339). These societal groups are not only lobbying government, but are working cooperatively with government to develop policies. Also in contrast to pluralism, network governance theory places emphasis on the interaction between non-state actors themselves in addition to their relationships with the state.

Exclusion of Non-Economic Actors from Policy Networks

There are several reasons why non-economic actors, such as Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations, would be excluded from or have limited ability to be effectively involved in policy networks. Generally speaking, "networks exist because the members have something to offer each other" and this normally prevents members of the policy *community* from becoming part of the policy *network* (Howlett and Rayner 1995). This factor may affect Aboriginal groups and ENGOs in their involvement in networks as other key actors, like industry and government, are less dependent on ENGOs and Aboriginal groups than the reverse. This has traditionally been the situation in Canada, though, as was discussed earlier, First Nation groups and environmental organizations, with their successes in the courts and in the public sphere, have garnered power that can threaten business as usual if they are not included in policy making in a greater way.

Downes (1996) lists three reasons for the exclusion of non-economic groups from policy making. The first is that "economic organizations have sufficient power to ensure the success or failure of policies in economic policy areas where non-production based organizations do not" (para. 15). Secondly, Downes suggests that only economic organizations are viewed as "sufficiently organized and hierarchically structured to enter into neo-corporatist bargaining and to ensure the compliance of their members to the outcome of any agreement reached" (para. 19). The third reason for excluding non-economic groups from neo-corporatist arrangements is that economic organizations are in a position to implement and enforce negotiated policies whereas non-economic organizations are not. However, Downes finds these arguments are not necessarily true for the ESD case in Australia, saying this perspective underrates the potential influence of environmental organizations to mobilize public protest and disrupt or prevent development projects.

In addition to these arguments as to why non-economic groups do not have the necessary prerequisites to be part of neo-corporatist arrangements, it should also be noted that resource industry associations "have resisted any effort to expand subsystem membership, contesting the legitimacy of environmental groups, for example, to participate in allocating resource lands and organizing local industry supporters to counter grassroots environmentalism" (Hessing and Howlett 1997). This active opposition by industry to expanding network participation to involve environmental groups or Aboriginal groups is another barrier to the meaningful involvement of such groups in policy processes.

Opting Out of Policy Networks

After all this discussion on why groups may be limited in their involvement in policy networks, it is important to note that there are several reasons why groups may *choose* not to be involved in the policy network. Environmental groups may opt out of involvement in the network or policy process to avoid mobilizing opposition and to maintain minimal obligations to the network. The latter allows peripheral groups the freedom to initiate more actions than centrally located actors who, because of the multiple obligations to the network, tend to react to initiatives of the periphery more than initiate actions themselves (Stevenson and Greenberg 2000). As well, actors may refuse involvement in a process in order to retain their status as opponents (Chess and Purcell 1999). Groups may also refuse to be involved in policy processes out of concern that their involvement in a process will be considered consent by state agencies (Downes 1996). When the consultation process is separate from the policy formation phase, groups may be 'consenting' to a policy for which they have no control over the final product. This is especially a concern for Aboriginal groups in Alberta with whom the provincial government has a legal duty to consult (Sharvit, Robinson, and Ross 1999). What constitutes consultation is a matter of some debate, thus Aboriginal groups want provincial agencies to be explicit as to whether any meeting with government is considered evidence of consultation. By opting out, Aboriginal groups avoid the situation where government agencies say they have fulfilled their duty to consult when Aboriginal groups are not yet satisfied with the process.

New Social Movement (NSM) theory would also suggest that characteristics of groups considered part of NSMs make it less likely for them to choose to be involved in formal policy processes. NSMs like women's, environmental and anti-racism movements that focus on equality and democracy contrast with social movements that are reactive in nature and are comprised of social groups whose privilege, identity, and/or security are threatened (Adkin

1998). New Social Movements are a more diffused and generalized struggle against many forms of power than were the social movements of the era prior to the welfare state and the institutionalization of industrial relations, when "class identity" was the core identity of those mobilizing for social change (ibid, p.10). Thus, groups falling under the categorization of members of a New Social Movement may find public involvement forums to reflect dominant values, like economic growth, that are antithetical to their own beliefs and choose not to participate (Downes 1996). As well, involvement in government agency processes may be seen as cooptation which could undermine a group's basis for public support (ibid). The organization of NSM groups is also characteristically non-hierarchical and non-bureaucratic; to be involved in policy processes often necessitates a more formal and hierarchical organizational structure which again, would go against the very ideals these groups are based on (Downes 1996; Stefanick 1998). This was the case with the Commission on Resources and Environment in British Columbia where government respondents in a study by Salazer and Alper (1996) reported that they found environmental groups more difficult to work with than corporations or unions because of the lack of hierarchy in ENGO organizations.

However, it cannot be assumed that all environmental groups follow non-hierarchical and non-bureaucratic organizational structures. Large environmental organizations like the World Wildlife Fund, World Resources Institute and Greenpeace, with annual budgets in the millions of dollars, have organizational structures more closely resembling those of multinational corporations than of local, grassroots environmental organizations (Rosenau 1997). In light of the pragmatic and ideological limitations faced by most environmental groups in accessing the policy process, however, many may choose to opt out of the policy network and focus instead on such things as public education and mobilization (Hessing and Howlett 1997).

Aboriginal Groups and Environmental Organizations in Canada's Natural Resource and Environmental Management Policy Networks

Environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups have been a part of the forest policy community in Canada, but tend to be excluded from existing forest policy networks (Howlett and Rayner 1995). The primary members of the Canadian forest policy network are business and labour, with labour playing a much less significant role than industry (ibid). Indeed, in a survey of perceptions of urban residents, Foothills Model Forest residents and Public Advisory Group members, it was found that all groups saw forestry companies, the provincial government and the oil and gas industry as having the most influence over forest management decision-making in Alberta. The federal government, forest scientists, environmental and conservation groups and First Nation groups were all perceived as having much less influence over forest management policy (Parkins, Stedman, and McFarlane 2001). The following will provide a brief overview of issues specific to aboriginal groups' and environmental organizations' involvement in Canada's natural resource and environmental management policy networks.

Aboriginal Groups

Despite their historical lack of influence in Canada's policy networks, the influence of Aboriginal groups in land and environmental management decision-making may be growing. Both on a global and national scale, there is a growing recognition of Aboriginal rights to share in the economic benefits and decision-making processes of resource development (Smith 1998; Bombay 1996; Robinson and Ross 1997). In the 1960s, gaining strength from the civil rights movement in the United States, Aboriginal groups began to challenge the "restricted interpretations of Native rights contained in Canadian jurisprudence" (Hessing and Howlett 1997, p. 58). Using various strategies including demonstrations, court challenges and media campaigns, Aboriginal groups were successful in getting Aboriginal issues on the political agenda in Canada (ibid).

Non-urban Aboriginal people's involvement in policy processes regarding resource and environmental decision-making has been strengthened for several reasons as summarized by Hessing and Howlett (1997): 1) their claim to prior ownership and use of resources; 2) their expertise in aspects of resource use, especially related to hunting, trapping and fishing; and 3) the impacts of resource policy on their lives. But Aboriginal people, particularly First Nations people, are asking for "a role in collaborative planning beyond general 'public involvement' practices, such as development-by-development notification, open houses, public meetings on key management decisions, and information sharing workshops" (Treseder and Krogman 2001, p.3). They are asking for involvement that is long-term and more fundamental than most public involvement processes (Treseder and Krogman 2001), such as co-management arrangements, where management of natural resources is shared in some manner between Aboriginal people, the provincial and/or federal governments, and possibly industry and other stakeholders (Treseder et al. n.d.).

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the rights of some Aboriginal groups in Alberta are still being negotiated through both Specific and Treaty Entitlement Claims. Aboriginal people may have both "Aboriginal rights", as recognized (though not defined) by the Canadian *Constitution Act* (1982), and "treaty rights", as defined by specific treaties signed by the Crown and Aboriginal people (Treseder et al. n.d.). Aboriginal rights may include hunting, trapping and fishing on ancestral lands. Treaty rights may include reserve lands, gratuities, and hunting, trapping and fishing rights within Treaty areas (Treseder et al. n.d.). The interpretations of these rights may vary between governments and Aboriginal groups, and disagreements over interpretations of rights may lead to litigation.

Beyond the need to fulfill legal obligations to Aboriginal peoples, the federal and provincial governments and Aboriginal communities themselves are concerned with the high levels of unemployment that many Aboriginal communities are facing. A recent study of American Indian Reservations found three factors that determine why some tribes develop economically while others do not. These factors are whether or not Aboriginal peoples have the power to make decisions about their own future, if they exercise that power through effective institutions, and if they choose the appropriate economic policies and projects (Plumptre and Graham 1999). All three of these factors illustrate the necessity of involving Aboriginal groups in processes like the NES Strategy in order for Aboriginal communities to develop their economies. It is increasingly problematic to limit or exclude Aboriginal groups from policy circles given their growing political power and their "claims to resource control and ownership and to a history of more successful and sustainable stewardship of land and resources" (Hessing and Howlett 1997, p.38). Indeed, with Aboriginal rights recognized in the *Constitution* and in treaty agreements, it is imperative that Aboriginal people are involved in land and environmental management decisions to ensure that their rights are not unduly infringed upon.

Environmental Organizations

> If it is impossible to abandon the initials 'NGO,' perhaps it is possible to reframe their significance in a more positive light. One candidate might be 'Necessary-to-Governance Organizations.'
>
> Anthony Judge, *NGOs and Civil Society: Some Realities and Distortions*

As the above quotation suggests, non-governmental organizations like environmental groups are becoming increasingly necessary participants in good governance. The growing expertise of NGOs makes them convenient agents to take over some of the duties formerly performed by government, often with better results (Rosenau 1997).

Along with growing expertise, NGOs are growing in political power. One example of this growing power is how, through networking directly with industry, the US Environmental Defense Fund was able to reach an agreement with McDonalds on the design of new packaging that would reduce the amount of waste produced by the fast-food restaurant chain (Moffet and Bergha 1999). Organizations like Greenpeace have also had success in lobbying both industry and government, seeing legislation passed in the European Parliament to eliminate toxic compounds from children's toys and Suncor pulling out of plans to mine oil near Australia's Great Barrier Reef (Greenpeace 2002). These are only two of many examples of the growing ability of NGOs to affect change and achieve their policy objectives.

Despite the gains made by environmental organizations in their ability to affect policy, these groups still face several limitations in being meaningfully involved in policy processes akin to network governance. Uncertainty of funding for environmental organizations, the temporary and issue-specific nature of many environmental organizations, their organizational instability which may be exacerbated by struggles between and within ENGOs, and inconstant levels of public support all undermine the effectiveness of these groups in pursuing their policy objectives (Hessing and Howlett 1997). While there is some evidence of increasing involvement of non-traditional groups in policy networks, there is still skepticism that the transition of Canadian resource and environmental decision-making from a closed, bargaining model to a more open model is more symbolic than real (ibid, p. 234).

Social Theory on Network Involvement

Social theory offers additional insights into why some societal groups may be more involved in policy networks while others are not. The following section briefly reviews three bodies of theory in this area: resource mobilization theory, political opportunity structures, and social constructionism.

Resource Mobilization Theory

Resource mobilization theory is a pre-dominantly North American theoretical paradigm in the study of social movements in contemporary industrial societies (Canel 1992). Resource mobilization theory counters older views of collective action like collective behaviour theory, which suggests collective action is triggered by rapid social change and that participants of collective action are irrational, and relative deprivation theory, which suggests that collective action results from perceived conditions of deprivation (ibid). Unlike these theories, resource mobilization theory posits that "participants in the new movements were rational, well-integrated individuals or groups developing strategies in pursuit of their interests" (ibid, p. 24) and that grievances and inequalities may be preconditions for the occurrence of social movements but do not result in organized movements in all cases.

According to Canel (1992), the passage from the condition of inequality to action is "contingent upon the availability or resources and changes in the opportunities for collective action" (p. 24). Affluence and prosperity in a society, from this perspective, are seen as conducive to social movement activity because resources in the form of communication, money and an educated populace will be available. Canel (1992) cites the work of Ash-Garner and Zald who suggest that a small public sector, greater decentralization of governmental structures, and multi-class parties with diffuse ideological views and weak party discipline are all conducive to social movement activity and the autonomy of social movements.

On a more micro-level and with respect to resource availability for actors in natural resource policy networks, it is widely accepted that actors with productive interests in resource activities generally have much greater institutional and economic advantage over actors without productive interests, although the resources of labour unions and corporations are typically not comparable. This imbalance of resources limits the "opportunities for, and the effectiveness of, public involvement in resource and environmental policy process" (Hessing and Howlett 1997, p. 73). While the examples of the success of the Environmental Defense Fund and Greenpeace mentioned earlier may suggest that environmental organizations have the necessary resources to affect policy processes, this is not the case for many ENGOs or citizens' groups. The involvement of smaller, less powerful organizations in policy processes is often limited by shortages of resources, be they money, people or time (Moffet 1996; Howlett and Rayner 1995; Alberta Environmental Network 1993). The same can be said for many Aboriginal groups who have a long list of issues that their communities must address but only limited ability to address all of the problems they face. Imbalances of resources between network actors will still put some groups, such as ENGOs and Aboriginal communities, at a disadvantage in policy processes. As such, it is often suggested that resources be provided to facilitate the involvement of societal groups in the policy process in order to ensure representative and effective public input (Moffet 1996). Hessing and Howlett (1997) suggest that the funding of environmental groups with tax revenue is justified since all of society benefits from the work of these groups.

Political Opportunity Structures

In addition to the resources groups may need to have an impact on the outcome of policy processes, other literature on network involvement suggests that groups also need a favorable political opportunity structure.[14] Diani (1996) defines political opportunity structures as "those dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (p.1055). Diani suggests that actors will be more or less likely to engage in the political process depending on their perceptions of whether or not there is an opportunity for independent action in the political system (that is, whether or not newcomers can play an autonomous role in the given context), and the degree of stability of current political arrangements. If traditional alliances are holding fast and there is little perceived need or opportunity for new players in the political structure, actors will perceive very low opportunities for institutional action. Thus, perceptions of political opportunity structures may also affect the level of involvement of various societal groups in policy networks in any given situation.

Social Constructionism or Framing

Other authors working in the area of network involvement or policy processes focus on the effect of the social construction of reality in networks. Hajer (1995) argues that "social constructionism and discourse analysis add essential insight to our understandings of contemporary environmental politics" (p. 263). Framing theory is commonly used in these approaches to understand the mobilization of groups and individuals (Stevenson and Greenberg 2000; Benford 1997). These theories focus on the ability of groups to present convincing and compelling representations of reality, accounting for the cause of the problem, suggested solutions, and reasons for acting. Using the terminology developed by framing theorists, groups need to present convincing diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames (Benford and Snow 2000), that is, they need to assign blame for a particular problem, present a solution, and provide convincing reasons why action must be taken immediately. These frames are critical to either attract people to particular political beliefs or undermine competing representations of reality.

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[14] Note, Canel (1992) considers political opportunity structures, which he defines as "the conditions in the political system that either facilitate or inhibit collective action" (p. 41) part of the larger body of literature on resource mobilization theory.

Skillful construction of frames can result in the exclusion of some actors or some courses of action (Krogman 1996). The effectiveness of a frame can also increase the chances of a group to gain much needed resources, including "legitimacy, money, facilities, and labor" (ibid, p.372). Framing theory asserts that a common frame, or shared meaning among actors, is necessary for individuals to mobilize and take collective action. Constructionist perspectives on network involvement therefore have much in common with the analysis of actors' discourses: both seek to explain the strategies used to establish or contest the meanings of particular conflicts (see Dryzek 1997).

Making Involvement Meaningful: Characteristics of Quality Public Participation Processes

While the involvement of a wider range of societal groups may be becoming a societal norm in policy making, participation in networks must influence outcomes to be meaningful. Examples of greater involvement of such groups are becoming more and more common, and the justifications for their involvement have been clearly articulated, yet one cannot assume that involvement of these non-traditional groups in policy networks will inevitably be meaningful. Drawing from literature on public participation, this final section will highlight some key ingredients to move from limited, symbolic levels of public involvement to something more closely resembling the close, informal ties between state agencies and societal groups that are called for by network governance theorists.

Two-way or multi-way communication is essential for any legitimate attempt at public involvement (Parkins et al. 2001; Chess and Purcell 1999). More traditional forms of public involvement like public meetings and open houses are weak in this respect as they were generally used to inform the public of an agency decision and then defend it. To be meaningful, public involvement processes must provide an opportunity for quality input from the public with an opportunity for those comments to have some effect on the policy outcome.

Effective two-way communication is fostered by a process with a scope broad enough to encompass what the public, and not just the government agency, may want to discuss. In his research on Public Advisory Groups (PAGs) in Alberta, Parkins (2002) found that PAGs are a feudalized public sphere where ecocentric views, or dissenting views in general, are excluded from the discourse. Restricted agendas that keep ecocentric arguments off the table "have provoked environmentalists to take their arguments to a public arena where procedured rationality is more firmly entrenched—namely the courts" (Parkins 2002, p. 180).

The scope of the agenda may be limited in part because of differing ideologies between government agencies and the various stakeholder groups with interests in a particular issue. Both environmental groups and government officials have noted that differing assumptions and beliefs among environmental groups and other actors pose significant challenges for consensus processes (Alberta Environmental Network 1993). Thus, meaningful public involvement must allow for an agenda that is broad enough to encompass the concerns and ideologies of all involved, thus motivating groups to stay rather than opt out of the process.

Anther key ingredient to meaningfully involve societal groups is to include the public early on in the policy process. Public members resent being asked to comment on something after most of the work to reach a decision has already been done (Chess and Purcell 1999; Alberta Environmental Network 1993; Salazar and Alper 1996). Early involvement of public groups leads to a greater sharing of power with the public. Without being given any power to influence the policy process and outcomes, public involvement can be a frustrating experience for all involved (Moffet 1996; Tuler and Webler 1999) and may rightly be considered by participants a symbolic effort at participation that is more targeted toward fulfilling agency requirements than a genuine effort to seek public input.

While the literature includes numerous other suggestions for effective public involvement-- such as designing processes that give something back to participants (Parkins et al. 2001) and that have clearly articulated goals (Chess and Purcell 1999)-- the final criterion to be discussed here is the issue of trust. Adapting Moffet's (1996) ideas on trust with regard to risk assessment, it can be said that if the public does not trust the government agency making the policy or coordinating a public involvement process, then no amount of "communication" will overcome that distrust and convince the public of the merit of the policy or the legitimacy of the process (see also Alberta Environmental Network 1993; Salazar and Alper 1996). Participation processes can increase the degree of trust and public confidence in an agency (Mangun and Henning 1999), but once broken, that trust can be hard to rebuild. Under such circumstances, it is less likely that public members will be willing to participate in any government process, thereby diminishing further opportunities in which trust could be rebuilt.

Government agencies obviously play a large role in the success or failure of a public involvement effort. Chess and Purcell (1999) outline several actions government agencies can take that will either undermine or improve the public involvement effort. "Overdominance of group dynamics, failure to appropriately publicize forums, placement of citizens in a reactive position, and condescension to participants" are all actions likely to limit the success of a public involvement effort (Chess and Purcell 1999, p. 2690). On the other hand, "providing technical assistance, initiating approaches to engage in and improve dialogue with indigenous people, engaging liaisons to encourage participation, making a commitment to follow recommendations, and providing neutral, [and] competent facilitation" are some actions that can improve the quality of a public involvement endeavor (ibid). Contextual factors such as the "history of the issue, the context in which the participation takes place, the expertise of those planning the effort, and the agency commitment" are also likely to have influence over the process and its outcome (ibid).

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the basic concepts of network governance, including the reasons why it is thought to be emerging and how network governance relates to the increasing demand for broader public involvement in natural resource and environmental management decision-making. As well, theory on policy networks and public participation was reviewed, with a specific focus on the Canadian context and environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups. From this review we learn that there remain several barriers to the participation of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in natural resource and environmental management policy networks that will hamper the formation of network ties between these groups and government. As well, we have seen that despite an increase in the quantity of public participation efforts and in the capacity of civil society to engage in these efforts, one cannot assume that the civil society will have an impact on the policy outcome. This is in light of counter-balancing effects to the increased capacity of civil society in neo-liberal environments.

While network governance is being heralded as the optimal form of governance, able to draw on the benefits of having close ties with societal groups as well as having an autonomous bureaucracy, the actual potential for such arrangements with groups other than industry and labour has yet to be fully explored. The findings and discussion of this thesis will contribute to our understanding of the potential for network governance arrangements with environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in Alberta and for inclusion of these groups in the natural resource and environmental management policy network.

Chapter 4: Methods

Research Approach

The purpose of this study was to examine the Northern East Slopes (NES) Strategy using the framework of network governance and to explore the complexities of involving environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in Alberta's natural resource and environmental management policy network. This study was qualitative in its approach given that the aim was to cultivate a deep understanding of the public involvement process of the NES Strategy and the relationships between key stakeholder groups and the provincial government in Alberta. Thus semi-structured interviews were used as the research instrument, allowing for exploration of the meanings of the NES network as constructed by the participants (Patterson and Williams 1998; Silverman 2001). A review of documents related to the NES Strategy provided additional information about the process of public involvement in the Strategy and the comments received from participants of the consultation meetings. Combined, these two approaches allowed me to develop a nuanced understanding of the public involvement process and the policy network as perceived by participants and organizers.

Research Design

The data collection for this study consisted of two parts. The first part was a review of secondary data in the form of websites, newspapers, and NES Strategy documents, which achieved several purposes. One purpose was to identify the

NES policy network as reported in documents from the Strategy. A second purpose was to familiarize myself with the issues that ENGOs and Aboriginal groups were focusing on in Alberta around the time of the NES Strategy. A third purpose was to generate an initial list of potential interviewees. Finally, a brief overview of the draft recommendations of the NES Strategy provides an initial assessment of the influence of the various stakeholders on the Strategy and the accuracy of respondents' perceptions of the same.

The second part of the research consisted of one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with individuals from the Alberta government and three key stakeholder groups with interests in the NES area: industry,[15] ENGOs, and Aboriginal communities. Interviews took place over two summers, 2001 and 2002. Human ethics approval for this research was received in the summer of 2001, prior to beginning interviews. The interviews from the first summer were exploratory and followed a very open-ended questionnaire. The intent of these exploratory interviews was to familiarize myself with key issues for land and environmental management in the province as viewed by the different respondent groups. The second summer of interviews followed a more structured, though still open-ended, questionnaire. The questionnaire used in the second summer of interviews was designed to solicit comments that would characterize the NES policy network as perceived by the various participants, including interactions among actors in the network, identification of the core actors in the network, and participants' perception of their own position and effectiveness in the network.

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[15] Industry representatives were generally from mid-level management or industry associations and did not include union representatives. See "Limitations of Methods and Study" for further discussion on this point.

As well, these interviews explored the explanations of industry, government, ENGOs, and Aboriginal groups as to why ENGOs and Aboriginal groups are positioned as they are in the NES policy network and their suggestions for how the involvement of these groups in future regional strategies could be improved. The interviews also identified alternative strategies employed by ENGOs and Aboriginal groups to achieve their objectives for land and environmental management in Alberta.

Sample

My sample of respondents was generated by general purposive sampling, and a specific form of purposive sampling known as snow-ball sampling. In my review of website publications, newspaper articles and NES documents, I "purposely" selected individuals that I thought would be especially informative to interview (Neuman 2000). This initial sample expanded, or "snow-balled", as I gathered suggestions from interviewees of other people I should interview (Neuman 2000). The use of multiple sources (websites, newspaper articles, NES Strategy documents, word-of-mouth) to generate a list of potential interviewees helped to ensure that the list included people with divergent views. The sample size for this study is necessarily small given that it is intensive rather than extensive (Silverman 2001). I continued to generate my sample throughout the research process until my data collection reached the point of saturation, meaning I was beginning to hear the same themes repeatedly in the interviews and was not gaining any new information from further interviews.

Description of Respondents

Thirty-three exploratory interviews were conducted with thirty-six respondents in the first summer of this research (see Table 2). Four individuals from provincially based environmental organizations were interviewed. Two interviews were also conducted with representatives of two First Nation communities within the NES boundary and an informal discussion was also held with three members of a third First Nation group within the boundary. Interviews were also held with five representatives from forest companies operating in the area, and ten representatives from oil and gas companies and associations. Twelve government representatives were interviewed as well in this first summer, including two

Table 2: Description of Respondents

	Respondent Group	Interviews	No Interview	Total
Summer 2001	ENGO	4		4
	Aboriginal Groups	2	3	5
	Forestry Industry	5		5
	Oil and Gas Industry	10		10
	Government	12*		12
Total		***33***	***3***	***36***
Summer 2002	ENGO	5	1	6
	Aboriginal Groups	3	1	4
	Forestry Industry	3		3
	Oil and Gas Industry	1		1
	Government	5**		5
	Other	2	1	3
Total		***19***	***3***	***22***

*2 government respondents were Federal Government employees; the other 10 were Provincial Government employees

**1 government respondent was employed by the Federal Government; the other 4 were Provincial Government employees federal government employees, an Alberta Energy and Utilities Board employee, and various regional and provincial staff.

In the second summer of field work, 2002, nineteen individuals were interviewed (see Table 2), three of whom were interviewed the previous summer as well. Interviews were conducted with five environmental organization representatives, three from local environmental organizations and two from provincially based organizations. Three Aboriginal respondents were interviewed, two who were part of a non-status Indian association, and one from a Métis association. Interviews were also conducted with four industry representatives, three from forestry and one from oil and gas. As well, five government representatives were interviewed, including one federal employee. Two other individuals were interviewed who were involved with the Strategy to a great degree but do not fit into any of these categories. They will be referred to only as "Involved" or (INV) as any further identification would undermine their anonymity. In addition to these formal interviews, informal conversations were held with one First Nation representative, a representative from a local ENGO, and a third person who was involved with the Strategy but cannot be further identified. As well, numerous attempts were made to arrange an interview with four additional First Nation communities without success. This will be discussed more in the Limitations section that follows. In total, seven members of the Regional Steering Group were interviewed, five "citizens-at-large", or non-government members, and two government representatives.

Procedure

Initial Contact

Potential interviewees were contacted by e-mail or by telephone. The individuals were given a short explanation of the research project and were invited to participate in an interview. An information sheet with further details of the project was provided on request or once an individual had agreed to an interview (see Appendix VII). A time and place for the interview that was convenient for the interviewee was then arranged. Interviews took place in the respondents' offices or workplaces, in nearby coffee shops, or at the University of Alberta.

Consent

At the time of the interview, I would ask if the participant had read the information sheet and provide him/her with a paper copy if s/he had not. I would then give the participant a consent form to read and I would verbally explain the content of the form (see Appendix VIII). Once informed consent had been given, the recorded interview would begin.

The Interview

The interviews for this study took place over two summers, 2001 and 2002. Interviews in the first summer followed a very open-ended questionnaire and were intended to familiarize myself with the key issues in land and environmental management in the province and the key players involved (see Appendix IX). Interviews in the second summer followed a more focused, though still open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix X). The questions specific to this study were embedded in a more comprehensive interview questionnaire being used for a larger study in which I was involved. The interviews took approximately one to one-and-a-half hours. Questions related to my study addressed:

- Participants' perceptions of their own involvement in the NES Strategy and their satisfaction with their involvement in the Strategy,
- Priorities or goals of their group with regard to natural resource management in the province and the strategies they are using to achieve their goals,
- Their perception of the involvement of other stakeholders in the network and the appropriateness of the involvement of other stakeholders,
- Who respondents felt were the core actors in the NES Strategy and who they thought should have been the core actors,
- Who respondents were working most closely with in the network and who they would have liked to work more closely with, and
- Who respondents considered their 'allies' or 'opponents' in the network.

Data Analysis

The recorded interviews were then transcribed, in the first summer by me and the other graduate student working on the larger project in which this study was embedded, and in the second summer, by a paid transcriber. Transcriptions from the first summer of interviews generated 421 pages of single-spaced text, with the average length of an interview being 14 pages. Transcriptions from the second summer of interviews totaled 372 pages of single-spaced text, with the average length of an interview being 22 pages. I analyzed the text version of the interviews using the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo. The data was coded to identify major themes in the responses and to make comparisons within and across the ENGO, Aboriginal, industry and government participants' responses. Field notes I made during and after interviews were also analyzed, as well as various NES Strategy documents.

While timing did not allow for me to begin my data analysis while I was still in the interviewing process as I had originally planned, I was still observant of when saturation was occurring in the interviews and I was hearing themes repeatedly. I also made an effort to follow up on themes that emerged in early interviews in later interviews to improve the validity of my findings (Silverman 2001).

Documentation of Findings

The comments presented in the findings chapter of this thesis primarily draw on the second summer of interviews but also include comments from respondents in the first summer of interviews. As well, Strategy documents, including the Interim Report, the minutes from both rounds of public consultations, and a report written by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society are referred to in the findings.

Respondents' categories are denoted in the Findings chapter as (ENGO) for environmental organizations, (ABOR) for Aboriginal groups, (IND) for industry, (GOV) for government. As well, two individuals who were involved in the Strategy but are not part of the other four categories and cannot be identified in any more specific manner without compromising their anonymity are denoted as (INV). The gender of the respondent may have been altered in some instances to further protect the anonymity of respondents. References to "NES staff" in this thesis refer to government employees who were working on the NES Strategy. When presenting information from direct responses to a question in the interview, where responses fell into a few categories, I quantify the number of respondents in each category. In other cases, when presenting information volunteered by respondents, not in direct response to a question, I do not quantify the number of respondents.

Quotations from interviews presented in this thesis may have been altered slightly. It is common in speech to repeat the first word of a sentence or phrase and I chose not to include repeated words if I deemed them insignificant to the content of the passage. Minor changes, such as the previous example, have been made; however, I chose to leave some grammatical errors uncorrected in quotations. I feel the presence of these common speech errors gives the reader more of the sense of the origin of the data, that is, one-on-one interviews with individuals speaking in the moment. To have corrected these errors of speech would have changed the impression of these quotations and made them appear more formal and perhaps academic than they were.

Dissemination of Findings

As part of my intent with this research was to improve the involvement of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in future public participation processes, it is important that the results of my study are made available to those responsible for conducting public participation processes, i.e. government, as well as those participating in the processes. All respondents in this study will receive an executive summary of the larger research project, which will include the results specific to this study. As well, in the effort to make these findings available to other academics who are working on similar issues, I will write up the results of my findings and submit an article to an appropriate journal, such as *Environmental Politics*, for publication.

Limitations of Methods and Study

This study was subject to various limitations. One limitation of this study is that my focus on ENGOs and Aboriginal groups ignores other actors in the NES network such as the tourism, agriculture and mining industries, recreational groups, municipal governments, and labour organizations. All of these actors are significant to the land and environmental management policy network in Alberta and their participation in the NES Strategy would also be worthy of investigation. These groups were not included in this study in part because the focus of the larger project in which this study was embedded was on the forestry and oil and gas industries, environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups. Due to time and budget limitations, it was most efficient to focus on the same actors in this study as in the larger project. As well, initial reports on the NES Strategy process indicated that there were significant weaknesses in the involvement of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in the Strategy which prompted my interest in further investigating their involvement.

Despite the limited focus of this research on a subset of actors in the policy network, I believe my findings and conclusions regarding the involvement of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups are still valid. The responses from Aboriginal respondents, ENGOs, industry and government were sufficient to answer my questions as they focused specifically on the difficulties to involve Aboriginal groups and ENGOs in policy processes. Additional information from a tourism industry representative, for example, would not be likely to add significantly to my observations.

As is characteristic of much qualitative research, my interest in this study was primarily in meaning rather than behaviour (Silverman 2001). Thus, the perceptions of the interviewees were the main source of my data, rather than observations of their behaviour. Though this is an accepted orientation for qualitative research, it can pose limitations as I was dependent on the participants to share their subjective meanings with me and on my ability to interpret their meanings accurately. I kept this limitation in mind throughout the project so as to avoid drawing conclusions that would be more appropriate for observations of behaviour. For example, throughout the Findings chapter of this thesis, responses from interviewees are stated as exactly that-- their responses-- and not as issues of fact. As well, I verified respondents' perceptions whenever possible with other data from NES Strategy documents, including the transcripts from the consultation sessions and the draft recommendations document.

Another limitation of this study was the small number of interviews I was able to conduct with Aboriginal respondents. As stated earlier in this chapter, in addition to the three interviews that were carried out with Aboriginal respondents, I tried unsuccessfully to arrange interviews with four other Aboriginal communities. In one case, I drove several hours to the community after an interview had been arranged to find that the respondent was in another location that day for a meeting. No one else in the band office was knowledgeable about the NES Strategy and thus were unable to talk with me. At a second meeting with this respondent, I was informed that they would have to have the information sheet from this study reviewed by the band lawyer before they could participate in an interview. This was because they were involved in negotiations with the federal government and did not want to jeopardize those proceedings. Even after several follow-up phone calls, I did not hear from this individual again. I do not know why this was so I can only speculate that either they were advised not to participate in the study or were too busy with other priorities to meet with me again. In other cases, even after several phone calls and faxing the information sheet to the band office, my phone calls were not returned.

It is not surprising that my attempts to arrange interviews with Aboriginal respondents were plagued by some of the same difficulties NES staff encountered when trying to arrange consultations with Aboriginal communities for the NES Strategy. The reasons for these difficulties are key themes of this thesis that will be examined in the Findings and Discussion chapters. This aspect of the study could have been strengthened with more time allotted to establish contacts with the communities and perhaps with a less formal instrument than a structured interview questionnaire. This instrument may not have been the most appropriate for gathering information from Aboriginal respondents as direct questions of the type used in this study can be ineffective and inappropriate in an Aboriginal setting (Natcher and Hickey 2002).

Another limitation of this study was its single case focus. Focusing on a single case allowed me to go into great detail about the process of involvement and the perceptions of multiple actors, but further conclusions could have been drawn if even one other case study had been included in the study against which the NES case could be contrasted. For example, comparing the NES Strategy process with a similar process in another province may have clarified what aspects of these findings were unique to the current context of Alberta or common to other provinces as well, thereby indicating broader forces at work.

Despite these limitations, this study's findings are valuable in that they confirm much anecdotal knowledge about Alberta's land and environmental management policy network and provide evidence on which claims regarding the policy network in Alberta can be based. As well, these findings provide keen insight into the ways in which the participation of Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations in the NES Strategy was hampered, information which will be useful for both the organizers and the participants of future regional planning strategies, as well as for other social scientists studying public participation processes.

Chapter 5: Findings

Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the findings from two field seasons of interviews and a review of Northern East Slopes Strategy documents. Respondents in the interviews were asked to characterize the relationship between the provincial government and three key stakeholder groups in land and environmental management: environmental organizations, Aboriginal groups,[16] and the forestry and oil and gas industries. Respondents were also asked about the degree and nature of their involvement in the NES Strategy and their perceptions about the involvement of other groups. Difficulties in involving the various groups, and suggestions for how their involvement could be improved were also discussed. As well, respondents were asked about their perceptions about the alternative strategies groups were using to achieve their objectives for land and environmental management. Finally, respondents were asked to comment on who they perceived to have the most control over the NES Strategy and on their perceptions of the nature of government support for the Strategy. The summary of findings relating to these issues, and a brief assessment of the Draft Recommendations of the Strategy, follow.

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[16] I am using the terms "Aboriginal groups" and "Aboriginal communities" in this thesis intentionally, in order to refer to First Nations, Métis, and Non-status Indian groups in a concise manner. The use of these terms is not meant to disrespect the unique status of these groups.

Relationship Between Provincial Government and Key Stakeholder Groups

Respondents were asked to characterize the relationship between the provincial government and the three key stakeholder groups that were the focus of this study: environmental organizations, Aboriginal groups and the forestry and oil and gas industries. The responses to these questions characterized the provincial government's relationship with environmental organizations as weak and tense, with Aboriginal groups as weak but improving, and with the forestry and oil and gas industries as very strong and non-conflictual.

Relationship Between Provincial Government and Environmental Organizations

The relationship between the provincial government and environmental organizations was largely characterized as weak and fraught with tension by most respondents, in all four groups. While most comments characterized this relationship in negative terms, there were some positive comments on this relationship. Respondents suggested that in certain areas, the relationship was positive (GOV), that there was dialogue between government and environmental organizations (GOV), that relationships between environmental organizations and individual staff in certain government departments were fairly good (ENGO), and that the relationship was not adversarial (ENGO).

These positive comments were outweighed, though, by the more negative characterizations of this relationship. The relationship between the provincial government and environmental organizations was characterized as "not a good one" (ABOR, GOV), "toxic" (GOV), "rocky" (ENGO), "adversarial" (ENGO), and as "very antagonistic and confrontational" (ENGO). One government respondent stated that industry and Aboriginal groups both have better relationships with government than ENGOs. An environmental respondent suggested that the government does not view its relationship with ENGOs as a "major partnership." The major weakness in the relationship was seen by some to be at the political level rather than with individual staff in government departments.

The elaborations of why this relationship was so poor differed between government and ENGO respondents. Several government respondents said that environmental groups simply "walk away" from policy or public input processes if their demands are not met. Most government respondents placed the responsibility for the weakness of the relationship with the environmental groups themselves, saying that these groups were not responding to government attempts to improve the relationship. One government respondent, though, did suggest that government could do more to foster the relationship they had with environmental groups.

The comments from the environmental respondents countered this view suggesting that past experiences in public input or policy processes have been so frustrating and disappointing that many groups, as a policy, have decided not to participate in any more government-led processes until some substantial changes are seen in government's willingness to follow through on recommendations that come out of the processes. Several environmental respondents talked about "getting fried" or "being had" in public input processes and feeling that they were largely a "waste of time and energy". As a result of these past experiences, several environmental respondents indicated that ENGOs in the province were annoyed, frustrated, and getting militant as they felt they were being forced into direct action.

Environmental group respondents were more likely to identify government as the reason for the strained relationship. Various ENGO respondents stated that they felt the government did not like environmental groups, that they only tolerated ENGOs because they had to, that the government only paid lip service to environmental issues, and would sideline environmental groups whenever possible. Two Aboriginal respondents' comments were sympathetic to these views suggesting that the "extreme positions" that ENGOs sometimes take have only come about because government has been neglecting their responsibilities for land management. It was clear from all respondents' comments that, apart from individual relationships between environmental advocates and particular government staff, the relationship between environmental groups and the provincial government in Alberta is weak and often tense. Government sees environmental groups as largely responsible for the poor relationship while environmental groups place more blame with government.

Relationship Between Provincial Government and Aboriginal Groups

The relationship between government and Aboriginal groups was described by many respondents as improving. Government respondents were the most frequent to characterize the relationship as improving and evolving, although one oil and gas industry respondent and one Aboriginal respondent also characterized the relationship in these terms. The provincial government was seen by two ENGO respondents and one government respondent as making sincere efforts to improve the relationship and as having good intentions. Both government and Aboriginal respondents qualified their responses by saying that relationships between the provincial government and Aboriginal groups vary depending on the particular issue; the particular department involved; the particular Aboriginal community involved; and the status of the Aboriginal community, be they First Nations, Métis, or Non-status Indians. One government respondent also commented that the relationship between Aboriginal groups and the provincial government was actually quite new and has only been developing since the 1990s. Two environmental respondents and one industry respondent stated that they did not know enough about the relationship between the provincial government and Aboriginal groups to comment on it.

Government, ENGO and Aboriginal respondents also commented on the negative aspects of the relationship between Aboriginal groups and the provincial government. Respondents from all three groups commented on the history of mistrust between government and Aboriginal groups that still plagues efforts by government to engage Aboriginal groups in policy or public input processes. An environmental respondent characterized the relationship as "uneasy" and "paternalistic." A respondent involved with the Strategy commented that the relationship was "fairly strained." One Aboriginal respondent said that it "needs work" while another said it was even worse than the relationship between government and ENGOs. Reasons given for weaknesses in the relationship included that the provincial government still lacks the "Aboriginal skills" to meaningfully involve Aboriginal groups (ENGO, GOV). Leadership skills in the provincial government were also seen as lacking (ABOR) along with the political will to follow through on actions pertaining to aboriginal issues (ENGO, INV).

The legal implications of consultations were also seen as inhibiting government efforts to engage Aboriginal groups by several government and Aboriginal respondents. As discussed earlier, the government has a legal duty to consult with Aboriginal groups. If a meeting is labeled as "consultation," then government may claim that they have fulfilled their legal obligations. Thus, Aboriginal groups are hesitant to participate in a process if their participation may be deemed as consent and relieve government of any further responsibilities to consult with the community regarding that particular initiative. Thus, while respondents identified many hurdles to be overcome to improve the relationship between Aboriginal groups and the provincial government, like the history of mistrust and the issues surrounding consultation, several respondents felt that the relationship was improving.

Relationship Between Provincial Government and Forestry and Oil and Gas Industries

Government's relationship with industry was clearly the strongest according to the comments from respondents. Characterizations of the relationship between the provincial government and industry in the province painted a clear picture of a close and facilitative relationship. Government respondents said the relationship was "positive," "friendly," "good and strong,", and "cooperative." Industry respondents called the relationship "healthy," "proactive," and "positive." ENGO respondents characterized it as "a partnership," "cozy," "a little too cozy," "very close," and "facilitative." Aboriginal respondents saw the relationship as "very close knit" although varying depending on the issue.

Several of the comments from government, ENGOs and Aboriginal groups reflected a perceived bias towards industry and resource development in the province. Three ENGO respondents and one government respondent stated that government's desire to encourage resource development results in its active facilitation of the oil and gas and forestry industries' activities even when this means subordinating environmental or other interests. One ENGO respondent and one Aboriginal respondent commented that policies in Alberta are set to be advantageous to forestry and oil and gas companies and that these industries receive larger breaks from the government than other sectors or other interest groups. One Aboriginal respondent commented:

> If there wasn't the voice of people…and the government had their way with industry, they just would let industry do what they have to do as long as the royalty bases were coming back into the government's coffers.

One government respondent described how each government department is rather "protectionist" over the particular industry it manages. These government departments were said to "look out for their clients" even to the point of infighting between government departments in defense of a particular client. This respondent suggested that the Department of Energy is most likely to resist any significant changes coming out of the NES Strategy. Another government respondent indicated that industry is actually leading government in many areas and that the "province marches to the beat of industry more than the reverse."

Several responses indicated that there is a lot of interaction between government departments and the industries whose activities those departments regulate in some fashion. Specifically, respondents stated that there are a lot of "intersections between government and forestry across ministries and various levels" (IND), closed door meetings between government and industry (ENGO), and a tremendous amount of lobbying on the part of industry (ENGO). One environmental respondent talked about a forestry company in their area who had senior staff who were government liaisons that "run back and forth between Edmonton and here." One government respondent stated:

> We've tried to work really closely with industry whenever possible....We realize that's the best way to go.

All of these comments illustrate the high level of interaction between industry and government which contrasts with the relationship between government and ENGOs and Aboriginal groups.

There were some comments from respondents that countered these characterizations of the relationship between government and industry. One industry respondent said that there was skepticism on both sides of the relationship and a government respondent alluded to "some weaknesses" in the relationship despite its many strengths. The main tension in the relationship between industry and government was suggested to be over consultation with Aboriginal groups. One Aboriginal respondent described the situation as one where industry feels they have, to a large extent, been fulfilling the province's fiduciary obligations to consult with Aboriginal people regarding industrial developments and are now saying, "No more." Industry is putting increasing pressure on the province to assume greater responsibility for its consultation obligations. A respondent involved with the Strategy also commented on the tension between industry and government over consultation, saying that industry is trying to work with Aboriginal communities but government is either unable or unwilling to participate. This lack of initiative on the part of government was said to be causing grief for the oil and gas and forestry industries because industry wants clear provincial endorsement of negotiated agreements between Aboriginal communities and industry.

Apart from the tensions between government and industry over consultation, the relationship between these two groups was viewed as very strong by most respondents. The province was seen to favor industrial development and, therefore, favor these industries in disputes around land use, and there was a perception of a high level of interaction between these groups. The descriptions of this relationship stand in stark contrast to the descriptions of the relationships between government and ENGOs and Aboriginal groups.

Level of Involvement of Key Stakeholder Groups in the NES Strategy

The levels of involvement of environmental organizations, Aboriginal groups and the forestry and oil and gas industries in the Northern East Slopes Strategy are summarized below. Membership of the Regional Steering Group was a major issue of concern for most respondents and for this reason a summary of comments on the RSG is presented first in this section.

Involvement in the Regional Steering Group

The make-up of the Regional Steering Group was an area of much discussion in the interviews conducted for this study and in the feedback obtained through the public consultation process of the NES Strategy. Numerous concerns were expressed over the composition of the RSG. The Steering Group was seen by some as having a "clear and direct bias towards industrial development" (Abells and Henry 2002). As discussed earlier, Aboriginal groups were dissatisfied with the two seats reserved for Aboriginal members (Four Winds & Associates 2000; Four Winds & Associates 2002). A government respondent and two ENGO respondents noted that the RSG had weak representation from environmental groups. One ENGO respondent suggested the RSG should also have had better representation of tourism interests. An environmental respondent cited in the transcripts from the first round of consultations felt that the six to eight ratio of government to non-government members was too heavily weighted toward government. There was also concern over the "citizens-at-large," or non-government members (Abells and Henry 2001) as many of the so called citizens-at-large were affiliated in some way with industries in the region. Responses from ENGOs during the first round of consultations of the Strategy revealed their concerns over the fact that all but one member of the Steering Group were people who lived within the region. This was especially of concern given that the one non-local person was an employee of an oil company operating in the region but whose head office was in Calgary. This was problematic, ENGO respondents suggested, because the NES area belongs to all Albertans and the range of opinions of the people living within the region, and presumably the oil and gas industry representative, would not be representative of all Albertans.

These many complaints over the make-up of the RSG were addressed in the interviews with government respondents and other respondents who were involved in the NES Strategy, with a response explaining that the RSG was not set up to be a *representative* group:

> They weren't necessarily looking for representatives of various sectors, or interests necessarily, although the Regional Steering Group is made up of individuals that, not coincidentally, come from those various sectors.…What they were looking for was people who had proven skills and abilities, the ability to sort of look at the bigger picture…who had a broader range of experience, and in working with these sort of multi-stakeholders processes. (GOV)

Government respondents indicated that RSG members were selected for their ability to look at a number of different perspectives but have "expertise" in one. Thus, it was suggested to be simply by change that there were no representatives from environmental organizations on the RSG.

According to this view, even though no recognized environmentalists had seats on the RSG, government and industry respondents claimed that environmental perspectives were well represented by individuals on the steering committee. One government respondent stated that there were individuals affiliated with environmental organizations who had applied to be on the RSG, though they did not apply on behalf of those organizations. This respondent stated that those individuals were interviewed but not selected because they did not agree to abide by the rules of the committee:

> We didn't want somebody that halfway through the process said, "Well, I don't like the way this is going," and start lobbying government outside the process....We wanted to ensure that members participating on the steering committee dealt with their issues on the process and then the issues locally here within the steering committee and not lobby government outside of the process.

An industry respondent who replaced one of the original members of the RSG stated:

> Could someone with [Alberta Wilderness Association] or [Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society] affiliation been part of this? Absolutely....The fact that you are a member of one of these groups or not, I'm not sure was particularly relevant. Nor was it irrelevant. I mean, we're trying to consider as much input as we can. But I think there's also a sense that we're Albertans first. And a lot of us share a lot of the views espoused by the environmental groups. We may approach it in different ways.

These comments demonstrate awareness on the part of NES staff and RSG members that the composition of the Steering Group was viewed by some as lacking in the environmental arena and are examples of the justifications that were made in defense of the selection of members of the RSG.

One ENGO respondent had applied to be on the Regional Steering Group but was not accepted. This individual felt he may not have been selected because he was hesitant about the consensus format of the group:

> Within the actual interview I was asked, "Will you support and endorse this process within Alberta to the environmental community?" And I said to them I will endorse the process after it's finished if we feel that it has been a fair process. But I can't tell you now whether I'm going to do that or not. I mean, that's crazy, right?...You are asking me to say right now that I will carte blanche just go ahead and endorse the process with the environmental community within Alberta and I said I can't do that.

This respondent asked the selection committee conducting the interview how they saw the environmental community fitting into the NES Strategy process and how important they felt it was to have support from the environmental community. He said the responses he received were disappointing, some even referred to personality conflicts with particular individuals in the environmental community:

> I never really got a sense from the interviewing committee that they really gave [the environmental groups] much credibility. They were doing it [interviewing them] because they politically had to.

Originally, two seats on the Regional Steering Group were reserved for Aboriginal people. The selection of Aboriginal RSG members was separate from the selection process of the other citizens-at-large. Unfortunately, the selection process was not documented in any detail in NES documents and few respondents were able to comment on this aspect of the Strategy in interviews. According to respondents, government staff met with twelve communities in the early stages of the NES process to seek out individuals who might sit on the RSG. After several meetings had taken place, government staff was told they should be approaching area Chiefs and Tribal Councils[17] instead of local Chiefs on an individual basis (GOV). Attempts to get on the agenda of the meeting of area Chiefs were unsuccessful, so, instead, letters were sent out inviting the area Chiefs to attend a dinner where the Strategy would be discussed. Only one Chief turned out to the event. A seat on the Steering Committee was eventually given to a member of this community even though there was disagreement between NES staff and the individual over whether or not they were a representative of Aboriginal issues in general or of their community in particular (GOV). This individual reportedly only attended a couple meetings and, as a result, was removed from the RSG. A respondent involved with the Strategy said that the decision to remove this individual from the RSG was made in order to avoid the charge that Aboriginal participation was superficial or token, that is, only on paper. Dave McPhee of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation was an active member of the RSG for the entire process. At one point in the process, a third seat was offered to a treaty association at their insistence that their views could not be represented in the Strategy unless someone from their association was sitting on the RSG. To the frustration of the government representative who had negotiated getting the third seat, the treaty association turned down the seat when it was eventually offered. Unfortunately, further information as to why the seat was not taken was not available.

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[17] First Nations in Alberta are organized into various tribal or regional organizations, based on either treaty membership or regional location. These tribal or regional councils will have their own Grand Chiefs or Executive Directors (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development 2003b).

The composition of the Regional Steering Committee was a matter of contention for Aboriginal groups who were being contacted regarding the Strategy. Having "representation" on the RSG was seen as the only meaningful and legitimate form of involvement in the Strategy. All groups insisted that their views could not be represented by someone from outside of their community or tribal association, implying a preference for a direct relationship with decision makers for the area in which they live. Several Aboriginal communities suggested that an Aboriginal Steering Group, consisting of representatives from each Aboriginal community with interests in the NES area, be established to allow for full participation by all communities in the development of the Strategy (Four Winds & Associates 2000).

There was also skepticism among different Aboriginal groups about the legitimacy of the Aboriginal members of the RSG. A comment by one Aboriginal respondent illustrates this skepticism:

> I don't know him. He was never commissioned by any of the chiefs or the tribes I know around here. I've been asking around. So they probably just recruited anybody off the street just to say there's Aboriginal involvement.

A respondent involved with the Strategy also commented on the problems encountered with having only two Aboriginal people on the RSG:

> We knew, as soon as we saw those two Aboriginal names on the list, the first thing we get back from the community is those people don't represent us. Secondly, how were they chosen…and they're either potatoes or apples, right? Red on the [outside], white on the [inside]. So that's the comments we usually get back. So we were prepared for that.

The explanation by government officials that the RSG was not meant to *represent* individual groups or sectors, but only to ensure the general perspectives of various groups were present, did not appease the concerns of Aboriginal groups.

Despite these many issues of concern with the RSG, several respondents voiced support for the actual individuals on the Steering Group. Two ENGO respondents and one respondent involved with the Strategy all commented on their satisfaction with the individuals selected to be on the RSG.

When asked about subsequent strategies, though, four government respondents said that the Steering Group structure used for the NES Strategy will likely not be used in future regional strategies. Instead, a steering committee composed of only government members would guide further strategies. This government steering group would receive input from a public advisory board that would be able to accommodate more people than the seven citizens-at-large and two Aboriginal representatives the RSG structure had accommodated. Respondents stated that this structure would allow government to have more control over the timeframe and the outcomes of the strategy because public members would be limited to an advisory role and would not be part of the actual decision-making group. One government respondent stated that this control over the outcomes of the Strategy was important to avoid a situation where the recommendations of the Strategy are not taken by government. This statement implies that rather than accept the recommendations of the Strategy regardless of the content, the provincial government would rather control the recommendations from the outset.

Involvement of Environmental Organizations in the NES Strategy

Interviews with key informants from government and environmental organizations as well as an overview of Strategy documents revealed that though there were various opportunities for ENGOs to participate in the NES process, these groups, by and large, chose not to. These opportunities for involvement theoretically included representation on the Regional Steering Group, participation in both the targeted and general public consultation meetings, participation in the various Task Teams, as well as the opportunity to make presentations to the RSG.

Environmental organizations were on the mailing list to receive notices and updates of the NES Strategy, and also received updates through e-mails that were sent to the Alberta Environmental Network and the Yellowstone to Yukon, or Y2Y, listserves, both commonly used networks by many environmental organizations in the province (ENGO). Thus, though there were some concerns regarding distribution of information cited in the Interim Report of the Strategy, responses in interviews suggested that information on the Strategy was readily available to anyone who wished to receive it.

Environmental organizations were one of the key stakeholder groups for which targeted consultation sessions were planned, however, key organizations in the province made it known that they would not be participating in the process (GOV) (also Abells and Henry 2001). Twelve people attended the first targeted consultation meeting for environmental organizations and only two attended the second such meeting (Abells and Henry 2001; Abells and Henry 2002). These numbers illustrate the decision of many environmental groups to abstain from participating in the process. ENGO respondents said this decision was the result of frustrating experiences with past processes such as the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy and Special Places 2000. Government-led initiatives were reported by these respondents to be a waste of time because of the lack of commitment on the part of government to follow through with recommendations that come out of these processes. As one ENGO representative stated,

> We feel we have more influence on the decision-making related to land in that area…*externally* rather than we do inside the process as it currently stands.

Several ENGO representatives stated that they are more willing to work with industry- or ENGO-led initiatives than they are with government-led processes.

One of the five environmental organization respondents in this study stated that they had attended two public meetings of the NES Strategy. This person was the member of a local environmental organization that made a presentation to the RSG in June of 2001 (Integrated Resource Management 2001b). This was the only documented presentation by an environmental organization reported in NES Strategy documents.

The Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) was involved in working on the definition of wilderness for the wilderness value of the Social Task Team. One ENGO representative associated with the AWA said they were asked to be part of the Social Task Team working on the wilderness value and were given one day's notice for a meeting and five weeks to develop the wilderness value. This individual felt that this short time frame suggested a weak level of commitment to this value on the part of government, especially since this respondent thought that the other Task Teams had already been working on their various tasks for months. After some discussion, his organization hesitantly agreed to participate and drafted a definition of wilderness for the Social Task Team.

Several provincially based environmental organizations, including the Alberta Wilderness Association, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-Edmonton Chapter, and the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, along with some local ENGOs issued a media release in February 2002 stating their position regarding regional land use planning strategies in the province (Semenchuk and

Wallis 2002). The position statement asserted that the current multi-stakeholder processes were duplicating work that was already done in the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy (AFCS) and that the ENGOs would only participate in the new land planning processes if:

- Eco-system based management was applied, as it was in the AFCS;
- Participants could be based on self-selection within the major sectors;
- Funding would be provided to cover costs of participation;
- Consensus decision making was used, not majority voting;
- Adequate resources were provided for necessary scientific and economic research;
- The terms of reference were defined by all participants at the outset;
- An external facilitator was used; and
- Full access to government information was allowed (Semenchuk and Wallis 2002).

Prior to the media release stating the ENGOs' position on the NES Strategy, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), wrote a report on the process. The report stated that:

> Since Integrated Resource Management and its consequent land use guidelines will have significant implications for the way in which public lands outside protected areas are managed, understanding the Northern East Slopes Strategy and seeking to ensure that it incorporates the values that underlie CPAWS' mission, is an important task (Francis 2001, p.4).

This statement and the media release are evidence that environmental organizations were aware of the process but chose, for strategic reasons, to remain outside of it. A summary of the documented involvement of environmental organizations in the NES Strategy is provided in Table 3. Because the transcripts from the targeted and general public consultation sessions did not list names of attendees or groups represented at the meetings, it is not known if other individuals from environmental organizations who were not interviewed in this study participated in the consultation sessions. Given the evidence documenting the general stance of the major environmental organizations against the Strategy, it can be concluded that the involvement of environmental organizations, particularly the provincially based organizations, was next to none.

Table 3: Documented Involvement of Environmental Organizations in the NES Strategy

Environmental Organization(s)	Form of Response to or Involvement in NES Strategy
Athabasca Bio Regional Society	• Presented to the RSG, June 2001
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)- Calgary/Banff Chapter	• Issued report, "An Analysis of Alberta's Northern East Slopes Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management Strategy," October 2001
Alberta Wilderness Association	• Assisted Social Core Team in developing definition of "wilderness" for the Wilderness Value
Alberta Wilderness Association Albertans for a Wild Chinchaga, Bert Riggall Environmental Foundation, CPAWS-Edmonton Chapter, Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition, Edmonton Friends of the North, Environmental Resource Centre, Federation of Alberta Naturalists, Friends of Lily Lake, Rainforest Action Group of Edmonton, Sierra Club-Prairie Chapter	• Signed position statement of ENGOs in response to the NES Strategy, February 2002

Involvement of Aboriginal Groups in the NES Strategy

The involvement of Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy was an evolving process. The level of involvement of Aboriginal groups varied from community to community, as did their response to the NES Strategy, with some communities expressing support for the Strategy while others were more skeptical. NES staff altered the approach for involving Aboriginal groups throughout the Strategy, applying lessons learned after limited success with initial approaches. Several government respondents said that it was expected that consultation with Aboriginal communities would take longer to complete than other facets of the NES process. For Aboriginal groups, like environmental groups, there were several different avenues of involvement available: representation on the RSG, the targeted Aboriginal involvement process, the general public consultation process, participation in the Aboriginal Task Team, as well as the opportunity to make presentations to the RSG. Below is a summary of the involvement of Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy.

The process of seeking out Aboriginal members for the Regional Steering Group was described earlier. That process was intended to not only find potential members for the RSG, but also to seek comment from Aboriginal communities as to how they wanted to be involved in the Strategy. These early meetings were followed by the first round of targeted Aboriginal consultations, which involved seeking feedback on the visions, values and goals the RSG had developed. NES staff identified fourteen Aboriginal groups to be consulted in this first phase but only succeeded in arranging meetings with six of these (Four Winds & Associates 2000). Phone calls were made to band Chiefs or other community leaders to set up meetings. Attendance at the six meetings ranged from eleven to two community members. The meetings were held in the communities, either in the band office or community hall. In the meetings, often attended by one or two members of the RSG as well as two or three consultants, the RSG members and consultants would present the information about the Strategy and then the community would ask their questions and give their opinion on what was presented.

This first phase of consultations was largely regarded as a "dismal failure" by government personnel involved in the Strategy (GOV). One government respondent suggested this was because NES staff moved too fast, without having introduced the information to the communities adequately before seeking comment:

> They tried to sort of ramrod the process, and tried to solicit feedback prematurely, and they got shit all over.

The time frame for this first phase of consultation was relatively short, taking place over a two month period, from October to November in 2001. Transcripts from this phase show that consultants encountered many difficulties in trying to connect with Aboriginal communities. Even when several attempts were made to contact Aboriginal communities, phone calls were often not returned (Four Winds & Associates 2000). There was also an apparent lack of information about who might be a good contact in the communities. One government respondent said that the first round of consultations was hampered because government people "got caught up in the politics of tribal councils," which this author interprets as meaning government staff was not able to proceed past the point of seeking approval from Chiefs, and failed to make connections with community members beyond the Chief and council.

> We were unsuccessful in actually getting out. We would have wanted to talk to the general populace in those communities but you can't just walk into an Aboriginal community and do what you want like I can in Hinton.

Comments from Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy's Interim Report stated that Aboriginal communities did want to be involved in the Strategy, "but not just in the *consultation process*. They also want[ed] to be involved in the *decision-making process*" (Abells and Henry 2001, p.31, italics mine). Indeed, several comments from community meetings suggested that Aboriginal groups saw the Strategy as a means for them to help their communities "move forward economically, socially and culturally" (Four Winds & Associates 2002, p.4), yet they were frustrated with the mechanisms for representation and involvement.

The Aboriginal consultation process was originally designed without any input from Aboriginal communities. This was later seen as a mistake by government representatives. A new approach was developed for the second round of consultations that incorporated Aboriginal concerns. Different consultants were responsible for the second phase of consultations as well. By this point, the Aboriginal Task Team was formed and a communications toolkit had been developed specifically for Aboriginal consultations, which included a modified definition of sustainable resource management and other terminology that had been "Aboriginalized".

Also during this second round, the term "consultation" was eliminated from the vocabulary used in the Aboriginal participation processes. As mentioned earlier, the use of the word "consultation" was reported by many respondents to be a significant deterrent to Aboriginal involvement. Several Aboriginal respondents reported that if they agreed to be consulted, the requirements of some specific government departments would be met, giving "carte blanch to the industry and to government to do whatever they want" (INV). Changing the terminology from "consultations" to "meetings" resulted in increased support from Aboriginal groups, though leaders of some communities would still leave the room when government staff entered.

Another change made in the second round of consultations was around the idea of using community liaison people in the Aboriginal communities. The duties of the liaison people were scaled down from being boosters and spokespeople of the Strategy to simply arranging for space and refreshments for the meetings as well as doing some publicity. The liaison people were no longer expected to represent the Strategy or be able to answer questions about it. This original expectation was found to put community members in a difficult position as representatives of a government process. Reducing the expectations for the role of the community liaison was found to work better in the second round (INV).

The second round of consultations still faced problems but was considered by one government respondent to be 75 per cent successful compared to the zero per cent success rate of the first round:

> So the second time after we developed [the Communications Toolkit] and made the contacts and built some relationships, we were successful going into quite a few of the communities and just having the community session and talking to the local people, the general populace instead of just Chief and Council, which is what we wanted to achieve.

The responses from different Aboriginal groups to the Strategy varied. As one respondent involved in the Strategy suggested, the First Nation groups were less trusting of government than the Métis and non-status groups. While the initial plan was to do fourteen consultations, the second phase resulted in meetings with twenty-one different groups and over 100 meetings (INV). After the second round of meetings was complete, the minutes from the meetings were taken back to the community to give them an opportunity to make any revisions they thought were needed.

The Aboriginal Task Team, formed after the first round of consultations, was open to additional members throughout the process as long as they showed sincere interest in participating in the work of the Task Team. While the Task Team successfully improved Aboriginal involvement in the Strategy, a respondent involved with the Strategy suggested that the Aboriginal Task Team functioned too much in isolation from the other NES Task Teams and Regional Steering Group. This respondent also stated that while there were some Aboriginal people on the Task Team, along with some government and industry people, it would have been good to have even more Aboriginal people involved.

Government respondents generally stated that the attempts to involve Aboriginal groups in the Strategy were sincere and that a lot of effort had been put into this aspect of the Strategy. The involvement of Aboriginal groups in the Strategy was viewed as a long term process intended to build long-term relationships with Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal involvement, despite the interest of many aboriginal groups in the process, was constrained for several reasons which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Involvement of the Forestry and Oil and Gas Industries in the NES Strategy

The involvement of the forestry and oil and gas industries in the process was considered to be substantial by most government respondents. Industry was described by government respondents as being "very supportive," "more than willing to be involved," and "involved right from the start". Industry had been "providing input and advice all the way through" said another government respondent. The involvement of these key industries was sought even before initiating the Northern East Slopes project and they were involved in developing the original terms of reference for the Strategy (GOV), unlike the ENGOs and aboriginal groups. Five members of the Regional Steering Group were employed by the forestry and oil and gas industries. In addition to industry representatives sitting on the RSG, one government respondent suggested that government staff from various departments were also representing the interests of the industries they managed and, in this way, industry had additional representation at the Steering Group level. Targeted consultation sessions were also held with various industry groups throughout the NES process.

This emphasis on industry involvement was explained by one government representative as follows:

> We're working directly with each of those industries, and specifically the agencies or the organizations within the Strategy area because they're the ones most affected. And they also have the most valid information….I think we're doing what we need to to alleviate the concerns for their future use.

Other respondents also described the involvement of industry in the Strategy as substantial:

> Industry…is probably always a few steps ahead of other groups within a strategy area like this….They have the dollars. They have the employees that have a more sophisticated understanding and higher education and understanding of what strategies like this are about….They're able to play the game better. (INV)

One forestry respondent said that in addition to having representation on the Steering Committee, their company sent notices of meetings around their offices and employees had attended public meetings. They had also supplied the Strategy with data, and staff persons were sitting on some of the Task Teams. The incentive for industry involvement was described as follows:

> If you're involved up front, you can really help form the process or regulation…that's going to come out. That's a big thing because then you can kind of build it how it will work for you. (IND)

One ENGO respondent and an Aboriginal group respondent saw the reasons for industry involvement in a similar way:

> They're on there to make sure that it doesn't turn out to be too damaging.

There was concern stated by one government respondent regarding the continued support of industry once the Strategy reached the implementation stage:

> My concern is that self-interest on the part of industry is going to cause sort of a backlash. It's going to start lobbying government individually rather than as sort of an integrated unit. I can see that being a problem.

Another government respondent suggested that industry may "take things to a higher level" but that they will still stay involved in the Strategy. Apart from these comments, responses from all interviews and documentation coming from the Strategy suggest that industry had substantial involvement in the Strategy from setting the Terms of Reference, to representation on the Regional Steering Group-- both through industry staff and government staff-- as well as through involvement in the Task Teams and public consultation meetings. The forestry and oil and gas industries were clearly more involved in the Strategy than either environmental organizations or Aboriginal groups.

Difficulties in Involving Key Stakeholder Groups

Difficulties Involving Environmental Organizations

The involvement of environmental organizations in the Northern East Slopes Strategy has clearly been limited. Several reasons were offered by respondents to explain the difficulty to engage ENGOs in the Strategy, including a lack of trust on the part of ENGOs resulting from past experiences with government-led processes; the narrow scope of the Strategy; intimidation of environmentalists by those opposed to their views; an uneven political playing field; focus on local participation; and lack of resources.

Lack of Trust Based on Past Experiences with Government Processes. From the perspective of environmental groups, acknowledged to some degree by some government respondents, the most significant reason for their refusal to participate in the NES Strategy was their past experiences with government-led projects, such as the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy and Special Places 2000 (GOV, ENGO) and key similarities between those past projects and the NES Strategy. These projects were a large part of the work of ENGOs during the 1990s and resulted in great frustration for the environmental organizations that were involved in them. One ENGO commented on how different the 1980s were for environmental groups working in the province:

> [Government] told us how to go about getting some of those protection commitments. So they were quite helpful. Whereas now it's trying to make you jump through all the hoops and waste

> a lot of time in the process and not actually promise or guarantee anything at the end.

The change in the approach of government was attributed to not only a change in Alberta's government, but also to the larger change "in the way a lot of governments see the bureaucracy and the need to reduce the role of governments" (ENGO). As a result of the disappointment and frustration they have experienced in the past decade, many environmental groups in the province have taken the position that they will no longer enter into any government-led processes until there is a significant change in the commitment of government to follow through on recommendations coming out of the process (ENGO).

Scope of Process Too Narrow. The ideological divide between environmental groups and other stakeholders was evident in the scope of issues that had been set out for the NES Strategy. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's report on the NES Strategy identifies an emphasis on resource extraction as a troubling aspect of the Strategy. This report states that the government's approach is to promote "resource use that (by the way) protects the environment" instead of committing to protecting "the environment while allowing for sustainable resource use" (Francis 2001, p.21). This approach of government translated into a promise to "honor existing commitments" to the private sector in the NES Strategy, according to the Francis report.[18] With this delimiter of policy options set at the beginning of the Strategy process, many environmental groups saw the range of outcomes of the Strategy as too narrow to be able to meaningfully address their concerns.

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[18] While the Terms of Reference of the NES Strategy did not use the phrase "honor existing commitments," Francis may have interpreted this meaning from the text. This phrase was used, however, in some of the consultation materials that participants received at meetings and did evoke comment from various participants. There was disagreement, though, over whether or not "honoring existing commitments" meant all current allocations would stand, or whether companies could be compensated for the reversal of an allocation.

As well, one ENGO respondent spoke at length about the constraints environmental advocates face when trying to voice concerns about the intrinsic value of landscapes in a political climate where nature is viewed primarily as a set of commodities. She indicated that putting voice to the intrinsic value of nature in Alberta, especially in certain resource dependent communities, is very intimidating:

> As soon as you start bringing in [intrinsic values], you get told, "Oh, it's a bunch of religious fanatics…Mother Earth lovers and a bunch of bastards".

As a result, she said, environmentalists often feel it is necessary to state their concerns within utilitarian or commodity perspectives.

Some government respondents suggested that environmentalists are to blame for the perceived ideological gap because ENGOs are "inflexible" in their positions. Several government respondents said these groups "just walk away" when they are invited to participate. These respondents suggested that environmental groups have become so adversarial that other stakeholders are reluctant to participate in processes if certain individuals from the environmental community are involved.

Intimidation and Ostracism of Environmentalists. ENGO respondents also suggested that this hesitancy to express alternative views is partly a result of the intimidation they have experienced. One respondent spoke of the hostilities in Hinton between Cheviot mine supporters and opponents during the Cheviot Mine hearing just prior to the development of the NES Strategy. This respondent reported that a rock was thrown through her window during this time and her husband received four hate messages at his work number after she had written a letter to the local paper asking for a full and open dialogue in the hearing that would consider all options. Another respondent indicated that some Hinton environmentalists suffered economically through boycotts of their businesses at this time. A government respondent also asserted that the controversy over the Cheviot Mine hearing alienated environmentalists around the region:

> In Hinton, if you're considered an environmentalist, you've been ostracized pretty heavily.

Uneven Political Playing Field. Environmental respondents also pointed to an uneven political playing field as part of the reason they have opted out of government-led processes. After the disappointment of past processes, one ENGO respondent said his group gave a lot of thought as to why they failed:

> The answer that we came up with is that we're not on the same political playing field, that the power dynamics are not even. So, ultimately, when the real decisions were to be made—not the ones that were made around the table, where all of us were…arguing lots but eventually we came to things we all agreed on—but those were not the real decisions. The real decisions came afterwards, and they were based on where the true power dynamics lie.

Other ENGO respondents echoed these sentiments and said that even though a process might look good all along, the real decisions come after the process when the recommendations go into the "black box" in Edmonton. It was suggested by some ENGO respondents that industry and government were the groups involved in deciding the final outcome of these processes. With this uncertainty of outcome, many groups are choosing not to invest time and resources into processes like the NES Strategy.

Exclusion of Legitimate Extra-local Concerns. Another concern of environmental respondents was the focus to involve local people in the NES Strategy process. The report issued by CPAWS on the Strategy highlighted this issue by pointing to the policy document that guides the NES Strategy, "Alberta's Commitment to Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management." This document states:

> Decisions on resources and environmental management are taken in a provincial context *considering* broad public interest and *involving input from* those communities and industries that will be most directly affected by them. A *role* for provincial and national interests through consultation must also be provided (Francis 2001, p.23, emphasis by Francis).

This emphasis to involve local people is of concern to environmental advocates because local people are the ones "under the greatest practical and political pressure…to exploit the environment" (ENGO). It was pointed out by ENGO participants in the first round of consultations that the only member of the Regional Steering Group not to be a resident in the NES boundary was an employee of an oil company that worked in the area. ENGO respondents suggested that environmentalists from outside the area are constructed in the environmental conflict discourse as "foreigners" who are trying to tell local people what to do. One ENGO respondent questioned the validity of this construction given that the large companies operating in the area are not locally owned yet their representation in the NES Strategy and other processes is never questioned.

Resources Available to Environmental Organizations. The impact of resource availability on the level of involvement of environmental groups in the NES Strategy was also discussed in some interviews. Some ENGO respondents acknowledged that they are limited in the amount of work they can do because of limited funds or time constraints of volunteers in their organization and suggested that there should be reimbursement for travel and potentially time lost at work for participants in the Strategy. This was considered necessary by some respondents in order to have volunteers from the community represented in the process along with lobbyists and paid industry representation. However, another ENGO respondent indicated that though there are internal limitations to her group as far as resources or staff people, if the NES Strategy had been a meaningful process, they would have secured the resources to participate and followed through on a commitment to take part in the process.

Difficulties Involving Aboriginal Groups

The involvement of Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy was also plagued by various difficulties. The main issues that came out in the interviews and in the Strategy documents were lack of trust between Aboriginal communities and government; lack of resources and capacity of Aboriginal groups, as well as government capacity; the Strategy not being perceived as a priority issue by Aboriginal groups; the short time frame of the process; cross-cultural barriers to communication; the use of an inappropriate format for the representation of the concerns of Aboriginal groups; concerns over the implications of the use of the word "consultations"; and unresolved land entitlement and specific claims.

Lack of Trust. Lack of trust was identified as a barrier for Aboriginal involvement in the process by three government respondents and two Aboriginal respondents in interviews, as well as in the transcripts from the first round of consultations. This lack of trust was cited as coming from past experiences which have resulted in the perception that Aboriginal participation in processes like the NES Strategy is token participation (GOV, ABOR). This lack of trust made participants more suspicious of the terminology of the Strategy visions, values and goals (GOV) (also Four Winds & Associates 2000), discussion of which took up a large amount of time in meetings between NES staff and Aboriginal communities. Notes from the first round of consultation with Aboriginal communities also showed that there was the perception that they were being consulted after the fact, that is, after the terms of reference, visions, values and goals had been written (Four Winds & Associates 2000). There was also the perception of a lack of commitment on the part of government to follow through on their intentions to involve Aboriginal communities in the process given the large amount of time and resources Aboriginal participation demands. Without working to rebuild trust, one Aboriginal respondent said, the success of Aboriginal involvement in this process or others will not reach its full potential. From observations of this involvement process, it is this author's opinion that, without improved trust, this and other processes are unlikely to fulfill even the minimum requirements for meaningful Aboriginal involvement.

Lack of Resources and Capacity. The lack of resources and capacity for Aboriginal participation was mentioned as a significant barrier to aboriginal involvement in the Strategy by four government respondents, three Aboriginal respondents, and a respondent involved with the Strategy. Several respondents mentioned a lack of resources, skills or staff within Aboriginal communities as preventing these groups from being meaningfully involved in processes like the NES Strategy. This is especially the case given the large number of projects that seek Aboriginal involvement:

> These people are having hundreds of people contact them every year now for consultations of one sort or another. (GOV)
>
> And everybody was going to the Aboriginal groups and bombarding them with lots of paper and saying, "Well, you've got to be involved in this initiative." And it became overwhelming to them. (INV)

Without trained people or sufficient resources to review the material for different projects, Aboriginal communities are not able to respond to the many requests for their involvement. This lack of staff also resulted in a lack of continuity between consultations for the NES Strategy, as NES staff would return to a community and find the group of people they had been dealing with in earlier meetings had been replaced and they needed to reintroduce the Strategy before they could seek any response from the community (GOV). The capacity of Aboriginal groups varies from community to community but was generally considered to be a limiting factor to involve Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy.

A government respondent also noted that government itself lacks staff with the necessary skills and expertise to address Aboriginal community concerns. One respondent involved in the Strategy suggested that this lack of awareness of how to go about Aboriginal consultation resulted in poor results of first round of consultations:

> There's a whole protocol towards contacting Aboriginal communities that maybe we didn't quite understand when we went out and started.

It was also noted by a respondent involved in the Strategy that more staff would be needed to conduct the number of meetings necessary to achieve the meaningful involvement of Aboriginal groups. This lack of skill and capacity on the part of government and/or its hired consultants was also noted as a constraint on engaging aboriginal groups in a meaningful way.

Priorities of Aboriginal Communities. Aboriginal communities were also noted to have several other demanding priorities that claimed what resources they did have and prevented them from being more involved in the NES Strategy. This factor was noted by two government respondents, two Aboriginal respondents, one oil and gas respondent and a respondent involved with the Strategy. Respondents stated that Aboriginal communities were choosing to work on issues at the federal or provincial level, rather than at the regional level of the NES Strategy for two reasons. First, by addressing a land management issue at the provincial level, the band could address the issue more efficiently than by addressing the same issue multiple times in several regions. Second, a government respondent said that Aboriginal people would rather work with higher levels of government (i.e., Deputy Ministers, Ministers, or the Premier, not regional level managers) who they see as the real decision makers and such interaction would honor the nation-to-nation relationship they generally seek with the provincial government.

Short Time Frame. Related to the lack of resources and multiple, demanding priorities of Aboriginal groups was the short time frame in which the process was conducted. Comments regarding the short time frame came out in the first round of consultations as well as in interviews with two Aboriginal respondents and one government respondent. The Aboriginal respondents indicated that involvement in a Strategy like the NES requires a great deal of time, and without sufficient resources or staff to work on it, they were limited in their capacity to respond to the request for comment on such short notice. Transcripts from the first round of consultations show that consultants, in many cases, did not have their phone calls returned despite leaving several messages, indicating more time was needed to even establish contact with communities, let alone seek their comments on the Strategy. Several Aboriginal respondents suggested that, due to the short time frame of the consultation phases, they were unable to become fully involved in the Strategy. With too little notice, and their limited staff, they felt their participation could only be superficial in the given timeframe.

Cross-Cultural Communication Barriers. Another barrier that was identified by two government respondents and one Aboriginal respondent as well as the transcripts from both rounds of consultation was the cultural and language barriers NES staff encountered when trying to engage with Aboriginal groups. Language was a clear barrier with one Aboriginal community in the first round of consultations as English was not a comfortable working language for one of the Elders present (Four Winds & Associates 2000). As well, one Aboriginal respondent explained how in his culture, people do not debate things the way people in Western cultures do. Debates, he said,

> would almost be offensive to an Aboriginal person. So even the style and the way things are done…impact on the results.

Some Aboriginal participants in the Strategy indicated they did not want to discuss the issues in an open forum but would rather take the information home with them and later relay their comments back to the NES consultants. Another example of cross-cultural miscommunication was found in the consultant's notes from the first round of Aboriginal consultations. The lack of response from one Aboriginal community prompted the consultant to record "I guess we assume that there are no concerns" (Four Winds & Associates 2000). This assumption shows a lack of understanding that silence does not imply consent in Aboriginal cultures (Sharvit, Robinson, and Ross 1999).

Inappropriate Format for Representation of Aboriginal Concerns. The format for Aboriginal representation on the Regional Steering Group was clearly inappropriate for Aboriginal communities as was made evident in numerous comments by Aboriginal and government respondents on this issue. NES staff encountered strong resistance to the idea that individuals on the RSG were to represent a general Aboriginal perspective rather than the perspective of a specific community or treaty association. Finding someone who could represent an "Aboriginal perspective" was especially difficult because, as respondents from industry, environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups stated, there is no one Aboriginal perspective. This lack of a single Aboriginal voice made the format of representation inappropriate in accounting for their views in the RSG structure.

Legal Implications of "Consultation". Another large issue that came up in interviews, as mentioned earlier, was the tension around the word "consultation". Once it was made clear, in the second round of public input sessions, that Aboriginal groups were not being "consulted" with, only met with, support for the Strategy grew. It was an important clarification for Aboriginal groups because the term consultation would have implied that the provincial government had fulfilled its legal duty to consult and would no longer be responsible for seeking Aboriginal comment on the process. Aboriginal respondents indicated that their involvement, if termed consultation, could have been read as Aboriginal consent to the policy outcome.

Unresolved Land Entitlement and Specific Claims. The issue of unresolved land entitlement and specific claims also came up in discussions with Aboriginal respondents. Though land claims were not within the scope of the Strategy, they were clearly a consideration for the Aboriginal groups involved as they did not want their involvement in or the outcome of the Strategy to affect their negotiations with the federal and provincial governments regarding their outstanding claims. A respondent involved with the Strategy reported that First Nations were the least involved in the Strategy compared with Métis and Non-Status Indian groups. The information compiled in Table 4 also suggests that bands with outstanding claims were less likely to participate in the NES Strategy process than bands without outstanding claims. Neither the Terms of Reference nor the Draft Recommendations of the NES Strategy mention these outstanding land entitlement and specific claims, let alone suggest that the outcomes of the

Strategy will be contingent on the settlement of these claims.

Table 4: Aboriginal Groups' Outstanding Claims and Participation in NES Strategy

Aboriginal Communities in NES Strategy Region	**Outstanding Treaty Land Entitlement Claims**	**Outstanding Specific Claims**	**Participated in 1st Round of Consultations**	**Participated in 2nd Round of Consultations**
**Yellowhead Tribal Council* (leading asterisk): *Yellowhead Tribal Council*	--	--	--	--
Alexander First Nation	None	1 in Active Negotiation	Yes	No
~Alexis Indian Band	None	None	Yes	No
Enoch First Nation	1 Pending	1 in Active Litigation	No	Yes
O'Chiese First Nation	None	1 in Active Litigation	No	Yes
Sunchild First Nation	None	None	No	No
~Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council (Driftpile, Sucker Creek, Kapawe'no, Sawridge, Swan River)	3 Pending (Driftpile, Sucker Creek, Sawridge)	3 Submitted (Driftpile, Sucker Creek, Swan River), 1 in Active Negotiation (Kapawe'no), 1 in Active Litigation (Swan River)	No	No
Western Cree Tribal Council (Duncan's, Horse Lake, Sturgeon Lake)	None	1 Submitted, 1 in Active Litigation (Duncan's), 2 Submitted (Sturgeon Lake)	Yes	No
Other				
~Aseniwuche Winewak Nation	None	None	Yes	No
~Marlboro and the Edson Friendship Centre	None	None	No	Yes
~Metis Nation of Alberta - Zone IV	None	None	No	Yes
~Mountain Cree/Small Boy Camp	None	None	Yes	No
~Nakcowinewak Nation and the Hinton Friendship Centre	None	None	Yes	No
~Paul Band	None	1 Submitted, 2 in Active Negotiation	No	No

*The Yellowhead Tribal Council was listed as a separate entity along with its six member Nations in the NES Strategy document that identified Aboriginal communities in the NES region (Four Winds & Associates 2000). This contrasted the treatment of the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council and Western Cree Tribal Council where only the councils were listed, and not the individual Nations. No explanation was given for this discrepancy.

~ Cases where the presence or absence of outstanding claims may have resulted in refusal or willingness to participate in the NES Strategy respectively.

Sources: Andres 2002, Four Winds & Associates 2000, Four Winds & Associates 2002, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada n.d..

Difficulties Involving the Forestry and Oil and Gas Industries

Concerns Over Cumulative Effects Assessment. Most respondents indicated that few difficulties were encountered in efforts to involve the forestry and oil and gas industries operating in the region in the NES Strategy. Perhaps the most contentious issue, mentioned by three government respondents, was industry concern over the cumulative effects assessments the Strategy was undertaking:

> Industry was pretty upbeat until we started to do cumulative effects assessments. And I understand why there is a bit of a shift there because all of a sudden…there was a possible threat because if you do the cumulative effect assessment, there's some bad things come out of there and some red flags come up, especially if they make one industry in particular look bad, that's not good. So, we took measures to deal with that….The Northeast Slopes program is based on promoting partnerships and promoting consultation and promoting integration. You don't want things like that to arise that pulls people apart. So you've got to manage the risk. (GOV)

There were concerns on the part of industry over the credibility of the information being put into the cumulative effects model, a concern that NES staff attempted to address:

> We've been working very hard with both [the forest industry and the petroleum industry] to help us populate the model with credible information from their own industry. (GOV)

There were also concerns over the possibility that the Strategy would result in additional layers of bureaucracy for development approvals (GOV), and one respondent involved with the Strategy indicated that there had been some difficulty in getting the oil and gas industry to the table consistently and suggested this may be because they were not regionally based. Apart from these concerns, though, respondents had little to say when asked about the difficulties encountered in trying to engage the forestry and oil and gas industries of Alberta in the Strategy. Indeed, their high level of involvement in the Strategy discussed earlier in this chapter is evidence of minimal constraints on the involvement of these industries in this process.

Summary of Difficulties Involving Key Stakeholders

Table 5 provides a summary of the constraints the three stakeholder groups faced in their involvement in the NES Strategy. From these lists, it is apparent that ENGOs and Aboriginal groups faced a unique set of barriers to their involvement in the NES process, and that the forestry and oil and gas industries experienced minimal constraints to their participation.

Suggestions for Improving Participation of Key Stakeholder Groups

Respondents in this study were also asked to comment on what they thought could be done to improve the involvement of the three key stakeholder groups in processes like the NES Strategy.

Improving the Participation of Environmental Organizations

With regard to environmental organizations, two government respondents and one respondent involved with the Strategy suggested that a successful outcome in a process like the NES Strategy, where government seeks input from a broad range of stakeholders and then follows through on the suggestions that come out of the process, would increase the level of trust environmental groups have for government-led processes. This trust or relationship building was seen by two government respondents and one Aboriginal respondent as a key to improving the involvement of environmental organizations in future policy processes.

Table 5: Difficulties in Involving Key Stakeholder Groups in NES Strategy

Environmental Organizations	Aboriginal Groups	Forestry and Oil and Gas Industries
Lack of trust	Lack of trust	Concerns over outcomes of cumulative effects assessment
Intimidation of environmentalists	Lack of resources, capacity	
Scope of process too narrow to accommodate ecocentric objectives	Regional strategy not a priority	
Uneven political playing field	Short time frame	
Exclusion of legitimate extra-local concerns	Cross-cultural communication barriers	
Lack of resources	Inappropriate format for representation of Aboriginal concerns	
	Legal implications of "Consultation"	
	Unresolved land entitlement and specific claims	

Government could also demonstrate its sincerity to involve the public in such processes by allowing environmental groups to be involved in developing the agenda and terms of reference for a project (ENGO). The all-government steering group of the subsequent regional strategy for the province is evidence that the government has, in fact, already resolved to do the opposite. The perception of environmental organizations that the Strategy was limited to options that would honor existing commitments, interpreted as allowing all existing resource allocations to stand, was a major deterrent to their participation. Had these groups been involved in the formation of the terms of reference for the process, the focus of the Strategy may have been broadened to encompass their concerns and alleviate their unease over the commitment to honor all existing commitments. Another ENGO respondent suggested that policy processes should follow the format of the Northern River Basins Study[19] which included more scientists and academics.

One government respondent said that increasing ENGO involvement would be difficult because ENGOs and other stakeholders had differing values. This individual also suggested that ENGOs have to be willing to compromise on some issues and to prioritize their demands. At the same time, this respondent stated that government needs to acknowledge some of the points raised by environmental organizations, which may include the renegotiation of some resource allocations. Addressing weaknesses in provincial policy may also result in more participation from ENGOs as they would then feel that their values are reflected in the overarching policy guiding regional strategies, and that these policies would have the strength to result in the changes that environmental groups are pressing for (ENGO).

Other suggestions included that the Regional Steering Group should come out on the land to actually see the areas environmental groups were concerned about (ENGO), and that more grassroots, local environmental organizations were needed so environmental advocates would not be seen as foreigners or outsiders when they try to participate in such initiatives (ENGO). The validity of this suggestion is questionable, though, given that even local environmentalists were treated as "traitors" by pro-development interests in the Cheviot mine conflict. Another ENGO respondent suggested that reimbursement for expenses would assist environmental organizations in participating more actively.[20]

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[19] The Northern River Basins Study, a four year project launched in 1991, looked at the impacts of human activities and development in the Peace, Athabasca, and Slave River basins. The project was managed by a twenty-five member Study Board made up of Aboriginal leaders, government officials, municipal representatives, as well as members of the environmental, health, agricultural, industrial and public sectors. The Study Board appointed a seven-member Science Advisory Committee, a group of renowned independent scientists, to oversee the Study's scientific work (Alberta Environment 1996).

Improving the Participation of Aboriginal Groups

Some of the suggestions for improving the participation of Aboriginal groups in processes like the NES Strategy referred to large, contextual issues, while other suggestions referred more specifically to aspects of the NES Strategy itself.

Some of the suggestions for addressing the larger issues included building trust in the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and government. Two government respondents and one Aboriginal respondent suggested that government needs to put sincere effort into building relationships with Aboriginal communities in order to improve their involvement in processes like the NES Strategy:

> There's going to be the need for you to continue to do the same kinds of things you're doing now, where you're going into the communities, you're having coffee, you're discussing issues, and you're building a relationship with the communities. (GOV)

With this building of relationships, there will be a building of trust which will result in more support from communities for processes like the NES Strategy.

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[20] Regional Steering Group members, because they were appointed by the Minister, were eligible for an honorarium for their participation. They were paid for attending meetings and for their direct expenses like mileage, meals and accommodations. The Aboriginal task team members, because they were not appointed by the Minister, were not eligible for the honorarium but did received compensation for their direct expenses as well. These were the only individuals to receive compensation for being involved in the Strategy (GOV)

One government respondent also suggested that the capacity of aboriginal communities to participate in land and environmental management decisions must be improved. This could be done, in part, it was suggested, through better government agency coordination between departments and between levels of government. As well, an Aboriginal respondent suggested that Aboriginal groups themselves need to have more dialogue on these issues so they can pool their resources and expertise. Finally, a respondent involved with the Strategy also stated that government needs to clarify the responsibilities for consultation currently shared between government and industry, and be more explicit with Aboriginal communities as to whether or not a meeting is being considered formal consultation or not.

Comments referring to the NES Strategy specifically included the need to involve Aboriginal communities from the very beginning of the process to increase their trust and, thus, level of participation in the process (GOV, ABOR). Involving Aboriginal groups early in the process and providing adequate amounts of time for communities to become familiar with new information and to give their response was seen as key to improving their involvement by one Aboriginal respondent, two ENGO respondents, and one respondent involved with the Strategy. It was also noted by these respondents that culturally appropriate forums and procedures should be used for consultations with aboriginal groups.

As well, it was suggested that the end product of the Strategy needed to be made clearer and more relevant to Aboriginal communities to increase their participation (GOV, ABOR). According to a respondent involved with the

Strategy, additional consultants need to be hired by government to successfully carry out the numerous meetings that are necessary for meaningful Aboriginal involvement in a process like the NES Strategy. In the absence of aboriginal civil servants, cultural awareness training, to alert government staff to some of the cultural differences between Aboriginal groups and Western culture that may impact the effectiveness of the process, was also seen as necessary by an Aboriginal respondent.

Improving the Participation of the Forestry and Oil and Gas Industries

There were few comments regarding how industry's involvement in the Strategy could be improved, largely because many respondents saw the influence of industry as already substantial. Three government respondents suggested that communication with industry could still be improved, particularly with the oil and gas industry. A clearer vision of the outcomes of the Strategy at its initiation might have brought more industry representatives into the Strategy process, a government respondent suggested. This was likely true for all participants as many respondents indicated the explanations of the expected outcomes of the Strategy were vague. One forestry company respondent suggested that the Regional Steering Group should have been given more decision-making power, so the recommendations that came out of the Strategy would be accepted by the Minister, no matter what. One ENGO respondent suggested that industry involvement should actually be limited to produce a better outcome of the Strategy:

> Ideally, you should just have concerned citizens who want to sit on [the RSG] and that the industry...could address but not be a...voting member.

Alternative Strategies Employed by Key Stakeholder Groups

Respondents were asked to comment on what alternative strategies they saw groups using to achieve their objectives for land and environmental management in the region.

Alternative Strategies of Environmental Organizations

The most commonly mentioned alternative strategy of environmental organizations was working through market mechanisms to influence industry. Six environmental respondents mentioned that this was one of their alternative strategies. Four ENGO respondents said they were working closely with either oil and gas or forestry companies, or both. Working directly with industry through things like forest certification processes and bringing international attention to forest practices to pressure companies to modify their land management practices were seen as viable ways to pursue their objectives:

> Our tactic now is to build a power base and that's going to be done through more of the [British Columbia] kind of approach, where we will go directly with industry, work with the markets. We're heavily involved with forest certification here and looking at other avenues. (ENGO)

This market approach involves not only working with the wood products producers, but also with large buyers like IKEA and Home Depot, to pressure those companies into creating a strict code of ethics for the products they will purchase. This strategy was felt to be effective because it bypassed government who was seen as a major inhibitor of the success of environmental groups to achieve their land and environmental management objectives.

In addition to an increased focus on using market mechanisms and working with industry directly to achieve their objectives, three ENGO respondents and three government respondents also mentioned direct government lobbying and acting as interveners in Environmental Impact Assessments in the province as other strategies used by environmental organizations to achieve their objectives. Four ENGO respondents and one government respondent also cited public education campaigns as another major strategy of environmental groups. These campaigns could include research, the development of educational materials, and working with media to publicize issues. The intended outcome of public education campaigns was to mobilize citizens to take part in letter writing campaigns and other activities coordinated by the environmental organizations. Other strategies of environmental organizations mentioned by respondents were litigation (ENGO, ENGO, GOV), working with Aboriginal groups (ENGO), attempting to initiate the *Sustainable Communities Initiative*[21] in their community (ENGO), and starting a local watershed reclamation project in their community (ENGO). Two ENGO respondents also indicated that they felt they were being forced into direct action, like demonstrations, because of the lack of progress they were making with other methods.

Alternative Strategies of Aboriginal Groups

When asked about the alternative strategies being employed by Aboriginal groups to achieve their land and environmental management objectives, one government and one Aboriginal respondent stated that Aboriginal groups are also trying to work directly with industry:

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[21] The *Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI)* is "an Alberta-wide program that brings together citizens interested in improving the health of their community.... SCI also connects different sectors of the community so that goals of sustainable development can be met through projects of interest to that community" (FEESA n.d.).

> We have tried to be proactive and we will spend a lot of time and effort and energy knocking on the doors of companies…saying, you know, "Stop at our office here, we want to sit down and work with you. We want to understand what it is you're doing." (ABOR)

As well, two government respondents commented on Aboriginal groups' preference to work government to government, where Chiefs would be meeting with politicians, not bureaucrats. Another government respondent stated that Aboriginal groups will "take their issues to a larger national or international stage" as another strategy to achieve their objectives.

Alternative Strategies of the Forestry and Oil and Gas Industries

Not many respondents were asked the question of what alternate strategies industry was using to achieve its land and environmental management objectives, but one government respondent did state that,

> [Industry] could…exert political pressure if they feel that whatever's coming out [of the NES Strategy] is threatening to their operation. They can certainly do that.

Perceptions of Influence Over the NES Strategy

When respondents were asked which group or sector they felt had the most influence over the Northern East Slopes Strategy, the most common response was that the provincial government and the politicians had the most influence or control. This was stated by two ENGO respondents, one forestry respondent, and one Aboriginal respondent. Two ENGO respondents stated that industry, namely forestry and oil and gas, had the most influence over the Strategy. One respondent involved with the Strategy suggested that the all-terrain vehicle (ATV) groups had significant influence over the Strategy as they were very vocal in their demands. Two respondents, one ENGO and one Aboriginal, stated that no one group had particular dominance over the process.

When asked which groups, if any, respondents felt needed more influence in the NES process, a variety of answers were offered. Two respondents suggested the tourism industry needed more influence (ENGO, INV), and two respondents suggested that Aboriginal issues needed more consideration in the Strategy (ENGO, ABOR). As well, respondents suggested that environmental organizations (ENGO), scientists (ENGO), and the municipal governments (INV) should have more influence over the Strategy.

From these responses, it appears that the NES Strategy was perceived to be, for the most part, in the control of government, and industry was viewed as having more influence than other groups. Several groups were seen as warranting more involvement but no one group was seen as ostracized from the process.

Support of Government for NES Strategy

Respondents were also asked to comment on the level of support they felt the Northern East Slopes Strategy had from government. One government respondent spoke quite highly of the level of government support for the project. In her opinion, there was substantial support for the project at the level of Ministers, even though the relevant Ministers had changed during the process. Financial support was seen as fluctuating somewhat with the price of oil, she suggested, but would continue as long as prices did not dip too low. Another government respondent said that the staff of the NES project was working very closely with the Environment Minster's executives to ensure that recommendations coming out of the Strategy would be likely to meet with Ministerial approval: "when the final product comes in to the Minister, there will be no surprises."

Another respondent, involved with the Strategy, was less optimistic about the outcome once the Strategy was submitted to the Minister. This skepticism was largely based on his past observations of government departments working at odds with one another. This concern was echoed by two ENGO respondents. One feared that the outcome of the Strategy could be drastically altered once it reached the "black box of Edmonton." Another suggested that the "political straightjacket" in the province would result in NES staff self-censoring the Strategy since they know the Minister would not likely accept the recommendations if they ask for "too much", that is, if they proposed numerous steps to slow, redirect or lessen industrial development. This respondent indicated that recommendations made by some Special Places committees were narrowed so as to present a set of actions that would more likely be accepted by government.

Other concerns with the level of government support centered around recent cutbacks in staff and the frequent reorganization of government offices that had occurred in the past few years. One forestry respondent indicated that this frequent rearranging of staff complicates their approval process. This comment was supported by comments of one government respondent who said this issue had come up in the NES Strategy because of a significant government reorganization that took place during the development of the Strategy. Another government respondent, commenting on the cutbacks in government in general, stated:

> The government's ability to do things has been so diminished, to the extent that we're in crisis management....We're just reacting to getting the daily approvals done to keep the industry going and reacting to crises as issues come up. Ability to do things such as firefighting and resource management...dealing with long term issues, the big things that have to get done just aren't going on. Industry is looking at it. Government certainly isn't....We definitely still have staff leaving. Primarily the forestry side because the guys have experience in oil and gas and forestry. So there's definitely a job market out there....Yeah, morale is low and stress is high 'cause guys get pretty frustrated.

Assessment of Draft Recommendations of the NES Strategy

The Draft Recommendations of the NES Strategy were released March, 2003, along with an overview document, a workbook for public response to the draft recommendations, and a media release. The 160 page Draft Recommendation document contains the Vision, Values, and Goals established in the first phase of public consultations (see Appendix II), as well as the issues identified in the second round of consultations and the strategic directions developed by the RSG to address these issues. Indicators and detailed recommendations are listed in the Appendices of the document. The strategic directions are grouped into four themes: Wise Use of the Land; Economic Sustainability; Conservation of Biodiversity; and Air, Water and Soil Conservation (Regional Steering Group 2003a).

The document as a whole presents vague and un-integrated recommendations for the most part. The Visions, Values and Goals, as may be expected, are particularly vague, with the potential to be interpreted as progressive statements but allowing room for interpretations that would support the status quo. More troubling are the strategic directions which lack any detailed information regarding the timeline for decisions or actions, or which governmental bodies would be responsible for carrying out the task. Upon reading the document, it is not at all clear what actions will come out of the NES Strategy. In a written response to the Draft Recommendations document, the Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) stated that, "The plan outlines a number of desirable outcomes with respect to wilderness and biodiversity protection, but *makes no commitment to achieving these goals*.... We fear that this initiative will join the long line of Alberta Government policies that are unenforceable and unfulfilled" (Snaith 2003, emphasis mine).

A weakness of the Draft Recommendations, pointed out by the AWA, is that the Strategy fails to address "the incompatibility of many of [the] goals" listed in the document:

> Although this plan claims to provide "clear, long-term direction for managing resource activities on crown land", in practice it seems to be little more than a summary of long-known land-use conflicts, and a summary of desirable objectives. The plan does little to clarify the process by which land-use conflicts will be reconciled and by which land-uses will be prioritized. In essence, this integrated planning effort lacks integration at the most basic level: that of themes and goals (Snaith 2003, p.1).

The Draft Recommendations document states that "A limited amount of potential future scenario development and trade-off analysis was carried out" (RSG Draft, p.8), indicating that more work can or will be done in the future in this regard, but it seems that trade-off analysis would have been a more useful outcome of the NES Strategy than the "summary of long-known land-use conflicts" the AWA suggests the Strategy has produced.

Given the vagueness of statements in the Draft Recommendations document, it is hard to predict what actions may be implemented as an outcome of this Strategy. A promising cumulative effects management system is outlined in the document, which could, if implemented, provide a mechanism to establish thresholds of activity in the region and coordinate the assessment of cumulative effects of development proposals. The cumulative effects management system would first have to be approved by the Minister of Environment and be allotted significant resources for it to become workable. It is too early to predict if the system envisioned in the Draft Recommendations will ever be implemented.

A notable characteristic of the Draft Recommendations document, as well as the other NES Strategy documents, is the lack of recognition of environmental organizations as a legitimate, distinct stakeholder in the region. The overview document of the Draft Recommendations lists "stakeholders" as "communities, Aboriginal people, industries, and government" (Regional Steering Group 2003b, p.1). This omission of environmental organizations in the list of stakeholders occurs in numerous other places in the NES Strategy documents, and appears to be an effort to delegitimize the position of environmental organizations in the region. Perhaps this omission is meant to draw attention away from the fact that environmental organizations were only marginally involved in the Strategy. Given that environmental organizations would be considered a "special interest" group in right-wing populist discourses, the omission of ENGOs from these documents is not likely a mere oversight.

The Draft Recommendations failed to address the AWA's concerns regarding parks and protected areas in the province:

> It is well-documented that Alberta's protected areas network is insufficient to protect biodiversity over time, and that more protected areas are required if we are to meet this goal....There is no consideration given to the need for additional protected lands [in the Draft Recommendations] (Snaith 2003).

Indeed, throughout the document there is no mention of the need for expanded parks and protected areas. Instead, the document states in several places that wilderness lands will be "maintained" and that existing parks and protected areas currently function to support ecological objectives. This outcome would likely not have occurred if environmental organizations had been meaningfully involved in the NES Strategy process.

Another notable omission in the Draft Recommendation document is its avoidance of the term "rights" when discussing Aboriginal issues, and its failure to mention the outstanding treaty entitlement and specific claims in the province. Instead the Strategy documents state that "Land use objectives must respect Aboriginal cultural connections to the land and its resources" (Regional Steering Group 2003c, p. 4), that "Aboriginal people in the region want to be included in decision-making processes that affect their cultural and economic uses of the land," (Regional Steering Group 2003a, p.19) and that a goal of the NES Strategy is to "ensure that government, industry and other stakeholders respect Aboriginal culture, values and traditions" (Regional Steering Group 2003b, p. 6). While these intentions are commendable, they would hold a lot more weight if they acknowledged that the government and Albertans are legally obligated to consult with Aboriginal people if their rights, as entrenched in the Constitution, are to be infringed upon. Also with regard to treatment of Aboriginal issues in the Draft Recommendations, the two values relating specifically to Aboriginal issues, "Aboriginal Way of Life" and "Capacity Building," are the only values that do not have an associated suite of indicators. There is no explanation for this missing information in the document but this author assumes that the Aboriginal Task Team did not have time to develop indicators before the submission of the Draft Recommendations. This would be evidence of the longer timeframe and increased capacity needed for meaningful involvement of Aboriginal groups.

There are several statements in the Draft Recommendation documents that reveal a pro-development bias and preference for incremental changes to the status quo, as opposed to any radical changes. The values of "Wise Resource Use," "Healthy and Sustainable Communities," and "Healthy and Sustainable Economy" all have corresponding goals that pertain to continued resource development (Regional Steering Group 2003b). The strategic directions listed for the value of "Integrity and Fairness in Decision Making" state that "Sustainable development in the region *requires* resource development while at the same time protecting key societal and ecological values" (RSG DRAFT, p. 96, emphasis mine). Five out of seven of the indicators for this same value are related to ensuring fast approval times for resource developments that minimize costs to industry. Only one indicator measures the number and type of public consultations. Apparently, the decision making referred to by this value is resource development decision-making, not public discourse on land management preferences. The Draft Recommendations document specifies that the "RSG does not advocate major changes being required within the regulatory environment or the approval process" (Regional Steering Group 2003a). All of these statements indicate a strong representation of industry views in the outcomes of the Strategy. Taken together with the omissions with regard to environmental organizations as legitimate stakeholders, the need for expanded protected areas, the "rights" of Aboriginal people, and the outstanding treaty entitlement and specific claims in the province, one can conclude that the weak involvement of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups and the strong influence of industry in the NES process have manifested themselves in the outcomes of the Strategy.

Conclusion

This chapter summarized the findings of this study regarding respondents' perceptions of the general relationships between government and key stakeholder groups, the involvement of these groups in the Northern East Slopes Strategy, and the initial outcomes of the Strategy in the Draft Recommendations. The following chapter will discuss the implications of these findings as they relate to the nature of Alberta's natural resource and environmental management policy network, the potential for a broad form of network governance in the province, and mechanisms of the NES Strategy used to frame a narrow debate and exclude ecocentric perspectives from the process. As well, I will discuss the main factors that affected the participation of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy and evaluate the Strategy as a public participation process.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter explores the most significant findings from the previous chapter and relates them to the theoretical issues reviewed earlier in the thesis. Specifically, this discussion will address: the structure of Alberta's natural resource and environmental policy network as described in this case study; the potential for network governance in the province with regard to land and environmental management; framing techniques used to narrow the debate in the Northern East Slopes process; criteria used as mechanisms to control inclusion and exclusion in the process; factors that affected the participation of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups; and strengths and weaknesses of the NES Strategy as a public involvement process.

This case study adds to an existing body of research on environmental policy formation in Alberta, and, therefore, to the general characterization or theorization of state-society relations in the province. This in-depth look at the involvement of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy provides insight into the nuances of this public involvement process specifically and into the relationships between these key groups in Alberta more generally. These findings may also provide starting points for further research into the subtle forms of control that can be exercised over public involvement processes, and the absence of labour in Alberta's natural resource and environmental management policy network.

Alberta's Natural Resource and Environmental Policy Network: Clientelistic or Captured?

The findings of this study clearly illustrate the varying levels of involvement of industry, environmental organizations, and Aboriginal groups in the Northern East Slopes Strategy. The forestry and oil and gas industries clearly had a privileged position with regard to involvement in the NES Strategy specifically, as well as in their relationship with the provincial government more generally. Industry representatives were involved in setting the terms of reference for the Strategy, while ENGOs and Aboriginal groups were not. Industry concerns were quickly attended to by NES staff, an example being when concerns arose regarding the being used in the cumulative effects model. In this case, companies were invited to supply their own data. The input and advice of industry were reportedly sought throughout the Strategy process, and the views of industry were well represented on the Regional Steering Group (RSG). All of these observations illustrate that the forestry and oil and gas industries occupy a central position in the natural resource and environmental management policy network in Alberta.

The same cannot be said for Aboriginal groups. Although there was a sincere effort to engage Aboriginal groups in the process as evidenced by the adaptation of approaches along the way, their level of involvement was still limited, especially when compared to that of industry. One can imagine, for example, that just as industry provided data for the NES Strategy, Aboriginal groups could also provide data through Traditional Land Use and Occupancy

Studies and studies of Traditional Ecological Knowledge[22]. However, this research has yet to be done in many of Alberta's Aboriginal communities and communities often lack the resources to carry out these studies on their own initiative. Processes like the NES Strategy would need to prioritize capacity building in Aboriginal communities and to support these types of studies to allow for the incorporation of Aboriginal knowledge in regional planning processes and for more meaningful involvement of Aboriginal groups. However, despite the limited success of the attempts at involving Aboriginal groups, it was clear that the provincial government was willing to put some effort into developing improved aboriginal involvement approaches in the NES Strategy.

The efforts to meaningfully involve environmental organizations in the NES Strategy were weak. Little effort was made to address the underlying concerns of these organizations that prevented them from being meaningfully involved in the Strategy. As such, legitimate means for their involvement were minimal. Environmental advocates were not selected for RSG positions. A short time frame was given to environmental advocates to be involved in the development of the wilderness definition on the Social Task Team, indicating to one respondent that the emphasis placed on the wilderness value was much less than the importance placed on other issues that were dealt with by the Biophysical and Economic Task Teams. Despite receiving feedback about the dissatisfaction of ENGOs with the make-up of the Steering Group and the limited scope of the process, no efforts were made to address these issues. This contrasts with the efforts made by the NES staff to secure a third seat for an Aboriginal member, and their adaptation of the Aboriginal approach throughout the Strategy. The provincial government's response to these two stakeholder groups suggests that a strategy of exclusion was employed in their relationship with ENGOs, while a strategy of cooptation was employed with Aboriginal people. Viewing the NES Strategy as flawed from its initiation, environmental groups had limited involvement in the Strategy, preferring to remain on the outside where they felt they had more influence. The responses describing the limited involvement of environmental organizations in the NES Strategy were supported by similar comments respondents made about the weak relationship between ENGOs and the provincial government in general, apart from this specific Strategy.

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[22] *Traditional Land Use and Occupation Studies* (TLUOS) typically involve interviewing the holders of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and "plotting this combined knowledge about natural phenomenon and their relationship to land use on maps" (Robinson and Ross 1997, p. 597). The goals of TLUOS are to collect and preserve components of TEK, and to integrate Aboriginal knowledge with scientific knowledge in forest planning (ibid). *Traditional Ecological Knowledge*, according to Stevenson (1996), can be specific environmental knowledge, knowledge of ecosystem relationships and/or a code of ethics governing appropriate human-environmental relationships held by Aboriginal people.

In this case, it appears that Aboriginal groups and ENGOs, as expected, were part of the resource and environmental management policy *community*, but were not part of the policy *network* (Hessing and Howlett 1997). The policy network in this example most closely resembles a clientelistic or captured network arrangement, with industry being the only societal group in the network with the state (Hessing and Howlett 1997). There was evidence of the network being dominated both by government (state), in which case the network would be clientelistic, and by industry (society), in which case the network would be considered captured. The reason for this dual-diagnosis of the network structure is likely because the interests of government and industry are very similar in this case. The Alberta government has a direct share in the financial benefits of resource exploitation on its public lands and is therefore interested in, or almost dependent on, a prospering resource extraction sector (Walther 1987). In the Alberta case, the state is sometimes resistant to policy change even when industry supports more aggressive environmental policies (Timoney and Lee 2001; Schneider 2001).

It is interesting to note that labour, although cited as a primary member of Canada's forest policy network (Howlett and Rayner 1995; Salazar and Alper 1996; Panitch 1979), and an active stakeholder in the Cheviot hearings, was never mentioned by respondents in this study or in Strategy documents. With regard to the interviews, this may be viewed as an artifact of the interview questionnaire as it did not focus on labour specifically. As well, the unionization rate in Alberta is the lowest in Canada, with about 25 per cent of the workforce members of unions (Harrison 1995a). Nevertheless, this notable absence of labour groups in the NES Strategy raises an important question about their role in regional planning endeavors in Alberta. This would be an area worthy of more research.

In his study of the Australian Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) Process, Downes (1996) suggests that traditional closed, corporatist style network arrangements may be enlarged to include environmental organizations and other non-economic organizations[23] that have the ability to disrupt production processes. There was reason to expect that environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups, with their ability to disrupt production processes of industries in Alberta, may have moved from the policy community into the policy network in the NES Strategy. However, while comments from several respondents indicated that environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in Alberta were perceived to have the power to disrupt production processes, their involvement in this particular Strategy did not demonstrate their inclusion in a corporatist network with industry and government. Thus, an interesting question is raised: in what cases will the power of non-economic groups to disrupt production processes gain them entrance into corporatist policy networks? In a case like Alberta, where the interests of industry and government are so intertwined, what are the opportunities for additional participants in the policy network? The relatively low legitimacy of ENGOs in Alberta also means that government and industry can proceed, without public outcry, to ignore ENGO requests.

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[23] Downes (1996) and others writing on corporatist arrangements identify capital and labour as the economic organizations whose primary goal is economic development. These are the groups traditionally included in corporatist arrangements with government.

Hessing and Howlett (1997) suggest that an obstacle for non-economic groups entering a corporatist style policy network is the active resistance on the part of industry to the inclusion of these groups in the network. There was evidence of active opposition on the part of industry to the inclusion of these groups in Alberta's policy network, particularly in the Cheviot Mine hearings, a significant event preceding the NES Strategy in the region. Respondents' accounts of the actions of the municipal administration and local industry leaders at the time of the Cheviot mine hearing add evidence to Hessing and Howlett's (1997) claim that industry will contest the legitimacy of environmental groups and organize "local industry supporters to counter grassroots environmentalism" (p. 111). The reported opposition to environmental organizations was both indirect, in the form of bumper stickers heralding the importance of the resource industries, and direct, in the form of threats and vandalism. Environmentalists were ostracized and portrayed as an outside threat to local communities. Thus, continued resistance on the part of industry may limit opportunities for the inclusion of environmental organizations in Alberta's land and environmental management policy networks.

The contrast in the sincere efforts made to involve Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy with the minimal efforts made to address environmental organizations' concerns is worthy of comment and can largely be attributed to the historical and political context of the Strategy. The relationship between the provincial government and Aboriginal groups, though new, is being taken seriously by government as evidenced by the recent publications of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development intended to address Aboriginal issues, such as the Aboriginal Policy Framework and Best Practices documents. There is the very real possibility of costly legal ramifications for the provincial government if they do not address Aboriginal issues adequately, as evidenced by numerous court cases in recent years (Smith 1995; Natcher 2001). The rulings of many of these cases, such as the *Delgamuukw* and *Sparrow* decisions, have strengthened the claims of Aboriginal people and increased the pressure on government to address outstanding Aboriginal claims (Natcher 2001). Environmental organizations in the province, on the other hand, although they also use litigation as a strategy to achieve their objectives, have much less legal weight than Aboriginal groups in Alberta. Environmental organizations have had success in challenging resource developments in various cases, like their appeal of the approval of the Cheviot Mine project, however, their ability to challenge resource developments is hampered by what they see as inadequate legislation for protected areas and land use policies falling under provincial jurisdiction (Kennett and Ross 1998; Kennett 1999). Without a legal basis for their claims, environmentalists can be dismissed as simply another "special interest" group. This difference in legal standing between Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations in Alberta may, in part, explain their varying degrees of inclusion in the NES Strategy and the lack of sincerity on the part of government in their attempts to include environmental organizations in the Strategy.

Industry, on the other hand, is vulnerable to the economic pressure that both Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations can apply to them. Aboriginal groups have blockaded roads and have been accused by industry of stalling project developments by "foregoing participation until the final stages of implementation" (Natcher 2001, p.115). While these actions of Aboriginal communities do have an impact on government, the impact on industry is more immediate and direct. Likewise, environmental organizations are able to mobilize support in their worldwide networks to address issues in a particular location, as in the case of the development of British Columbia's Forest Practices Code. Industry respondents in interviews talked about the "social license" they require from societal groups like Aboriginal communities and environmental organizations in order to continue their operations. As some industry respondents indicated, maintaining their social license to operate is as important to industry, in the long term, as obtaining the legal licenses they need to access their resources. This need to maintain their social license to operate is part of the reason why industry may be more sensitive than government to the concerns of these groups.

Network Governance in Alberta: Narrow Embeddedness, Questionable Autonomy

With regards to network governance and Evans' concept of embedded autonomy, the NES Strategy as an example of state-society relationships in Alberta falls short of Evans' (1996) ideal state of embeddedness where networks between the state and societal groups are "broadened to include an array of counterbalancing groups" (p. 277). The provincial government is clearly embedded with the forestry and oil and gas industry networks, drawing on the knowledge and data sources of these industries to supplement its own, and working closely with these industries to ensure implementation of the final outcome of the Strategy, even to the point of tailoring the outcome to industry preferences. However, the extended embeddedness with other societal groups that Evans (1996) suggests is necessary to counterbalance embeddedness with industry is lacking in Alberta. Networks appear to be developing between Aboriginal groups and government but, at this point, are still weak. The potential for embeddedness with Aboriginal groups exists perhaps in part because these groups, or their leaders, may be, though are not always, pro-development. Thus, their inclusion in the policy network would not threaten the development goals of industry and government. Network embeddedness with environmental organizations appears to be very limited and respondents expressed little hope for improvement in this regard in the near future. This may be in part because the conservation and preservation goals of these groups are seen as a direct challenge to the development norms of the government. Thus, even though environmental groups may have more capacity for involvement than Aboriginal groups-- given the former's research and scientific expertise, the links between local organizations and national and/or international organizations and networks, their media savvy, internet access and networking experience, and urban bases of support-- their ecological world view makes them less receptive to developmentalist discourse than some Aboriginal communities.

It is important to qualify this statement by noting that if some Aboriginal communities are more receptive to "development" promises and claims than are environmentalists, it is because of the very high rates of unemployment and all the consequences (poverty, drug abuse, illness, violence, youth suicide, etc.) that plague these communities. The life circumstances of environmentalists are typically quite different. Therefore, the problem is the absence of viable, short-to-medium term alternatives to industrial resource exploitation. Environmentalists have some responsibility to propose these, and to work for them, in conjunction with Aboriginal communities.

Evans argues that without these broader ties to society, the state will be vulnerable to pressures from industry to limit the role of government. This ideology of getting government out of business was apparent in responses by industry and government respondents. Neo-utilitarian sentiments of limiting the role of government are common in Alberta's natural resource management policy network, perhaps an indication that Alberta is not presently fertile ground for expanding efforts at network governance beyond industry-government embeddedness.

With regard to autonomy-- the necessary counter-balance to embeddedness in order to prevent capture-- the NES Strategy, as an example of the state-society relations in Alberta, appears to be lacking as well. The high degree of influence of industry in the province, both in the NES Strategy specifically and in the province more generally, suggests a considerable amount of capture (Krogman 1999). Industry's involvement in setting the terms of reference for the Strategy, their role in supplying data for the models used in the Strategy, and the apparent influence their concerns over the cumulative effects model had on the Strategy all raise questions about the degree of autonomy of the provincial government. This "capture" of the will of the provincial administration does not seem coerced, though, as was discussed earlier. Given the amount of revenue the province collects from the petroleum industry, it is in their interest, as well as industry's, to encourage development (Walther 1987).

The material basis for the pro-development stance of government is clearly a factor at play in Alberta's environmental policy arena. However, this "dependence" on oil and gas revenues is only a partial explanation for the government's support for industrial expansion into wilderness or semi-wilderness areas since development of these resources in not the only way for government to maintain or increase revenues. Given the neo-liberal orientation of the Alberta government, and fact that the base of support for the provincial Tories is in rural

Alberta and Calgary, it makes sense that the Klein administration is hesitant to increase the role of government in natural resource and environmental management in any way that would hurt the interests of the people they count on to stay in power.

In his prescription for informal connections with various societal groups for effective network governance, Evans does not address how these connections may be established. In a setting like Alberta, if government does not reflect on the quality of existing network connections and formulate strategies to improve weak or non-existent networks, there exists the potential for bias in network governance arrangements because some connections will be more convenient than others. The strength of the relationship between industry and government in the NES Strategy can be attributed to the historical and material context of Alberta, with its economy based primarily on the petroleum industry and other primary resource industries, such as forestry. Well-developed relationships between industry and government in this setting gave industry privileged status in their involvement in the NES Strategy, while weak or non-existent relationships with Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations hampered their involvement in the process. Thus, the historical and current quality of relationships with stakeholders must be accounted for in network governance arrangements in order for government to improve its relationships with societal groups other than industry.

Further limiting the autonomy of Alberta's bureaucracy are the cutbacks and multiple reorganizations of the provincial government that were mentioned by several respondents. In the 1994 budget cuts that decreased spending by 20 per cent on average, the ministry of environment was cut by 30 per cent (Smith 2001, p. 297). This was also the time that the environment ministry began to allow industries to monitor themselves, subject to government supervision and audit (Smith 2001, p.298).

These cutbacks and reorganizations have resulted in heavy workloads and high stress levels for bureaucrats. Some provincial bureaucrats are opting to work in industry instead, a sign that public sector jobs are not competitive with those in private industry, a prerequisite Evans' (1998) cites for effective autonomy. As well, the limited capacity of the provincial government to carry out long-term planning and monitoring makes it more reliant on industry to voluntarily assist with these tasks. Industry data, for example, are often needed to supplement the limited data that government houses. The limited capacity of the provincial government to carry out these tasks undermines its autonomy in natural resource and environmental management, which in turn, undermines the potential for successful embedded autonomy.

Framing a Narrow Debate

The composition of the Regional Steering Group was a key issue of contention for both ENGO respondents and Aboriginal respondents. The RSG was viewed as the key form of involvement in the Strategy and various respondents raised concerns over the number of industry and government representatives sitting on the Steering Group. While there was an opportunity for three Aboriginal people to sit on the committee, only one Aboriginal person served on the RSG throughout the process, indicating the inappropriateness of this representation format for Aboriginal groups. No member of the RSG was affiliated with an environmental organization.

The rhetoric around the selection of RSG members raises some important questions regarding methods of representation of interests in public input processes. Government respondents and members of the RSG were insistent that the Steering Group was not intended to be a representative group. Thus, although there were no individuals from environmental organizations sitting on the RSG, these respondents asserted that environmental views were adequately represented within the group. Three RSG members had educational backgrounds related to environmental studies, and two had work experience with industry in environmental management. There was no evidence in Strategy documents or from interviews that any members of the RSG were connected to an ENGO, and likewise, none appeared to have experience in non-use environmental advocacy. Clearly, to say the RSG had adequate representation of the environmental advocacy perspective is to employ a very limited definition of an "environmental perspective". According to any broader definition of an "environmental perspective"-- one that, for example, would include non-use and/or conservation values-- the RSG membership was clearly lacking in this area. The concerns of environmental organizations were given superficial treatment in this respect, and this will likely result in limited endorsement of the final Strategy from the environmental community in Alberta.

These findings parallel Parkins' (2002) argument that Public Advisory Groups in Alberta are feudalized public spheres where ecocentric views are kept out of the discourse. The framing of environmental perspectives in this superficial manner in the NES Strategy was effective in excluding individuals with an ecocentric perspective from the RSG, and ruling out some courses of action for the Strategy from the outset (Krogman 1996). Maintaining this narrow frame of natural resource and environmental management, with the dominant paradigm of resource use and the exclusion of ecocentric views, may have been key to garnering the support of industry for the Strategy, but had the effect of discouraging any involvement by environmental organizations.

The environmental arena is not the only area that the Klein administration has narrowed public debate. Smith (2001) argues that the creation of Regional Health Authorities run by government-appointed boards is another area where "the process of downsizing may have given the appearance that the government was relinquishing important powers, [but] in many instances the opposite was occurring" (p. 300). The Delegated Administration Act (Bill 57) introduced by Klein in 1994, but dropped in the next year, would have given cabinet ministers absolute authority to privatize government services,[24] and was seen as an avenue to diminish "the power of the legislative assembly and the citizens who elect its members" (Serres 1994, p.12). Another example of public debate being dominated by pro-business voices is the Alberta Economic Development Authority, made up of business representatives and/or senior public servants, which "reviews the spending of all departments, proposes business plans for them, and attempts to provide Cabinet with a comprehensive framework for economic development and policy" (Laycock 2002, p. 36; see also Harrison 1995a). Klein's administration also struck a task force to review environmental deregulation issues in 1994, where business was the only stakeholder identified with respect to government regulation (McInnis 1995). These examples, along with the NES Strategy case and previous environmental conflicts in Alberta, all make the case for the increasingly "symbolic and manipulative" (McInnis 1995, p. 247) nature of public participation in Alberta.

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[24] The Delegated Administration Act would also have exempted any corporate entity from the Auditor General's annual audits of government agencies and departments, as well as from the freedom of information legislation that followed (Serres 1994).

The perception that NES staff was self-censoring the outcome of the Strategy before submitting their recommendations to the Minister is also worth discussion. These comments from respondents, along with those referring to the political straightjacket of the province, suggest the presence of an ideological hegemony in Alberta where development of petroleum resources is the primary goal of government, one that is not open for debate. Arguments that the impacts of this industry may be detrimental to the environment, to other species, and to human communities and health are restricted in their impact to bringing about only minor, reformative changes. In other words, "defenders of the status-quo...limit the scope of actual decision-making to 'safe' issues" (Bachrach and Baratz in Cobb and Ross 1997, p. 16). None of these concerns are taken as legitimate reasons to reconsider petroleum production in any fundamental manner. Thus, the dominance of the petroleum-first mentality in government decision-making has resulted in consideration of only a narrow range of options for land and environmental management and has restricted the involvement of some societal groups in the policy network.

Selecting Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

The rationale for not selecting environmentalists for the RSG revealed a double standard in attitudes towards industry and ENGOs. The fear of the selection committee, according to several respondents, was that an environmental organization representative would leave the NES process to lobby government externally if they were dissatisfied with the process at any point. In contrast, only one government respondent voiced concerns that industry would lobby outside the process when the implementation phase arrived, despite a general acknowledgement among respondents of the immense lobbying power of industry. No one suggested that industry should be excluded from the RSG because of their potential to lobby government outside the process. Interestingly, several respondents indicated that industry did raise objections to content of the Strategy, specifically to how the cumulative effects model was being used in the Strategy. When industry expressed their concerns, government respondents indicated that they were quick to address the issue and invited industry to provide their own data to populate the model.

This situation illustrates two things. First, the concern over groups leaving the Strategy to lobby government externally is not applied evenly to all groups involved. Some groups, namely industry, were clearly granted more license to oppose or question the Strategy than others, like environmental organizations. Second, industry had a significant degree of influence over the Strategy having been involved in setting the terms of reference for the Strategy, having significant representation on the RSG, and as an important stakeholder in the eyes of NES staff. Thus, their ability to influence the outcome of the Strategy to a large extent makes it unlikely that they would ever need to walk away from the process in protest. It appears, then, that the rhetoric surrounding the possibility that ENGO members might walk away from the process was a legitimacy concern. Environmentalists could call into question the democratic legitimacy of the process or block "consensus". Their threat of exit is a political tool. The stated fear of government over ENGOs walking from the process was used as a device to screen environmental advocates out of the Steering Group positions and prevent them from employing this tool. With environmental advocates absent from the Steering Group, discussions over land management could proceed within a narrow scope of debate that excluded ecocentric perspectives. As was seen in this study, NES staff defended the legitimacy of the composition of the Steering Group with the argument that the RSG was not intended to be representative. This scenario differs greatly in how it would be perceived by the public than a scenario where environmental groups walk away from a process when dissatisfied with the outcomes. This was the case in the Special Places 2000 process where the criticisms environmental groups voiced over this process, and their eventual withdrawal from the process, undermined the legitimacy of the initiative. The set-up of the NES Strategy and the selection of RSG members effectively precluded this possibility, and sought to place the blame for the exclusion of environmental organizations on ENGOs themselves.

Members of ENGOs were also criticized for not agreeing to the consensus format of the Regional Steering Group. One ENGO respondent said they were asked in the interview by the selection committee for the RSG whether or not they would endorse the Strategy beforehand. To ask this of potential RSG members is another method of control, allowing the selection committee to exclude environmental advocates based on this criterion. This is especially the case since environmental organizations had much less influence over the outcome of the Strategy than industry. It is a much larger risk for environmental organizations to commit to the outcome of the Strategy beforehand than it is for industry members. Furthermore, upon closer inspection, it is clear that the NES Strategy was not based on consensus decision-making, but rather on authoritarian/hierarchical decision-making. The RSG itself may have functioned on a consensus model but the ultimate outcome of the Strategy was to be decided by the Minister, thus, the ultimate decision-making process of the Strategy was authoritarian. An individual's willingness to use a consensus model was an unfair selection criterion in that the actual decision-making process was not consensual but authoritarian, and, again, because environmental advocates would have much less influence over the Minister's final decision than industry.

The comments of several ENGO respondents indicate that they would be willing to participate in a process that was truly based on consensus, where the outcome of negotiations among the members around the table would not be overruled by the higher order executives of the government or altered as a result of behind-doors lobbying on the part of industry. Given that the next regional strategy, for the southern region of Alberta, will use a steering group comprised entirely of government members (Alberta Environment 2002), keeping the outcome of the Strategy even more in control of government, it appears that the format of the next regional strategy will likely be even less acceptable to ENGOs and garner even less support. Given that respondents in this study suggested government representatives on the NES Steering Group were essentially representing their industry clients, the all-government steering committee for the southern Alberta regional strategy, will likely still have a pro-corporate bias, though with this new format, government will be able to claim that the steering group has no industry representatives and all non-government members are being treated fairly. This claim will also overlook the bias created by frequent government-industry interactions that are lacking in the relations between government, and environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups.

Factors Affecting Participation of Environmental Organizations

The findings of this study clearly illustrate that provincially based environmental organizations made a conscious, strategic choice to remain outside of the NES Strategy. These groups were aware of the NES Strategy and informed of the opportunities for participation but decided that they would be better able to achieve their objectives by staying outside of the process. Responses from several respondents, not only from environmental organizations, indicated that environmental advocates do have power in the province; environmental organizations clearly felt that this power was greater outside of the process, than inside.

Some of the reasons for opting out of the NES Strategy given by ENGO respondents correspond with the explanations for opting out explored in the literature review. ENGO respondents suggested that their decision not to participate in the NES Strategy was in part to retain their status as opponents, or their autonomy (Chess and Purcell 1999). That the consultation phase was separate from the policy formation phase, and more importantly, the policy approval stage (Downes 1996), and the resulting lack of control ENGO respondents felt they would have over the final outcome, were also stated as reasons for opting out of the Strategy process. ENGO respondents also indicated that the orientation of the Strategy-- specifically their understanding that all existing resource allocation commitments would be honored and that little focus was given to protected areas-- was anti-thetical to their own values (Downes 1996), and another reason to stay outside of the Strategy. ENGO respondents also voiced concerns about the possibility that their participation would be taken as consent (Downes 1996).

The findings of this study also suggest that the perception of an un-level political playing field was a deterrent to ENGOs becoming involved in the Strategy. Respondents suggested that the "real" decisions were not made around the table with all groups present but rather behind closed doors where only government and industry met. This perception again decreased the incentive for these groups to invest precious time and resources in the process. ENGO respondents also indicated that they perceived there was an over-emphasis on the involvement of local people in the NES process, with less regard for the concerns of extra-local Albertans. This emphasis on the participation of local people was also a deterrent to the involvement of environmental organizations active in Alberta, many of which are provincially based.

The literature review of this thesis explored various reasons for lack of ENGO involvement in policy processes. Some of these explanations applied to this case while others did not. Factors that did not emerge as key constraints on the involvement of environmental organizations in the NES Strategy include uncertainty of funding, the temporary and issue specific nature of ENGO activities, organizational instability, and inconstant level of public support (Hessing and Howlett 1997). Downes (1996) posits three reasons why non-economic actors like environmental organizations are generally not included in corporatist style policy networks: non-economic actors are seen as lacking the power to ensure the success or failure of policies in economic arenas, as insufficiently organized or hierarchically structured to be involved, and as lacking the power to implement and enforce negotiated policies. These explanations did not emerge as key reasons for the low level of participation of environmental organizations in the NES Strategy, however, they may still be underlying reasons why these groups were excluded even if they were not stated by respondents. As well, resources were not cited as an important factor in the level of involvement of ENGOs though this is often a limiting factor for ENGOs' participation in policy processes (Hessing and Howlett 1997; Moffet 1996; Howlett and Rayner 1995).

Factors Affecting Participation of Aboriginal Groups

This study, like other research on Aboriginal involvement in land and environmental management, found that the Aboriginal groups in the Northern East Slopes area wanted to be involved in land and environmental decision-making as more than just another stakeholder (Smith 1995; Ross and Smith 2002; Treseder and Krogman 2001). The dissatisfaction of Aboriginal communities with the make-up of the Regional Steering Group and their general hesitancy to be involved in the Strategy could be attributed in part to their desire to be involved in decision-making on a higher level. Their prioritization of federal and provincial level projects, such as the *Aboriginal Policy Framework*,[25] and the development of the *Best Practices Handbook for Traditional Land Use Studies*,[26] over this regional strategy is evidence of this preference.

As well, Aboriginal groups were limited in their involvement in the Strategy due to limited resources and capacity (Hessing and Howlett 1997; Moffet 1996). Unlike comments regarding environmental organizations, response in interviews cited the limited resources and capacity of Aboriginal communities as a significant barrier to more effective participation, especially given the long list of other priorities of Aboriginal groups and the many requests for their involvement in various projects.

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[25] The *Aboriginal Policy Framework* was released in 2000 and "sets out the basic structure for existing and new Government of Alberta policies to address First Nation, Metis and other Aboriginal issues in Alberta" (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development 2000, p.1).

[26] The *Best Practices Handbook for Traditional Land Use Studies* "provides information that is intended to be helpful to anyone who wants to learn about conducting traditional land use studies" but is not a government policy or position (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development 2003a, p. iv).

In addition to the preference of a government-to-government relationship of many Aboriginal groups, particularly First Nations, and the lack of capacity in Aboriginal communities for meaningful involvement, the format for representation of Aboriginal interests on the Regional Steering Group was inappropriate to develop effective participation of Aboriginal groups in the Strategy. Aboriginal people did not support the format of three Aboriginal people representing the general interests of all Aboriginal communities in the NES area on the RSG, preferring to have a structure that would allow all Aboriginal groups to be represented in the Strategy. An Aboriginal Steering Group to function parallel to the Regional Steering Group was one suggestion of how effective Aboriginal representation might be managed. The Strategy's conceptualization of Aboriginal people was misguided in this way as it failed to see Aboriginal people as tied to specific places and as sovereign polities who are unable or unwilling to abstract their concerns in a way that could encompass a general Aboriginal perspective.

The participation of Aboriginal groups in the Strategy was also hampered by the Alberta government's apparent lack of preparation, training and/or commitment to carry out the Aboriginal component of the Strategy in an appropriate manner. The first round of consultations was hampered by a lack of support for the Strategy by community members because they were dealing with consultants who were unknown to them and who were presenting a Strategy that was, for the most part, new to them. The short time frame of this first round of consultations eliminated the possibility of connecting with more communities and establishing relationships that would carry over to the second round of consultations. Aboriginal and government respondents stated that the time allotted for Aboriginal consultations was not sufficient given the difficulty NES staff had in connecting with key people in the community, and the limited resources of those communities. A more relaxed time frame was seen as necessary to improve the participation of Aboriginal groups.

As well, Aboriginal groups faced cross-cultural communication barriers in their involvement in the NES Strategy. Language itself can be a barrier when English is the language used in the participation process but may not be the first language of some Aboriginal participants. Beyond language, cultural norms also affected the quality of involvement of Aboriginal groups. Several responses from Aboriginal groups indicated that the process of presenting information and soliciting a response all in one meeting was inappropriate for Aboriginal people who may not be comfortable in voicing their concerns in a public forum and who may want time to digest the material and formulate their concerns before presenting their views (Treseder and Krogman 2001; Natcher 2001).

For all of these reasons, the involvement of Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy was less than hoped for by NES staff, and for most Aboriginal communities in the Strategy area, could not be called meaningful involvement. Aboriginal respondents, like ENGO respondents, voiced concerns about the possibility that their participation would be taken as consent (Downes 1996). In the legal context of ongoing negotiations with the federal government over existing land entitlement and specific claims, and the obligation of government to consult with Aboriginal groups before developments are undertaken that may infringe on Aboriginal rights, it is clear why Aboriginal groups are hesitant to participate in any process where their involvement may be taken as consent. This is the context that future regional strategies will take place in as well and must be taken into account when developing appropriate methods for Aboriginal involvement.

Evaluating the NES Strategy as a Public Involvement Process

Strengths

The Northern East Slopes Strategy is evidence that public involvement methods are evolving. The Strategy went well beyond the traditional open-house and created multiple opportunities for two-way communication (Parkins et al. 2001; Chess and Purcell 1999). The consultation process itself with its targeted and general public meetings and a unique process for Aboriginal groups showed that a considerable amount of thought was given to how those groups, individuals, or sectors with interests in the area might be consulted. The multiple methods of response that were available to participants-- including, for example, verbal and written responses from the meetings, and the option of making a presentation to the Regional Steering Group-- gave participants flexibility in how they could make their views known to the Strategy developers. Updates on the Strategy were also readily available to those interested in receiving the NES newsletter.

As well, the adaptation of the approach to Aboriginal involvement throughout the Strategy is also commendable. While the criticism may be made that the original approach could have been much more effective and should have been developed with the input of Aboriginal groups from the outset, it is still important to credit NES staff for their attempt to improve the approach to Aboriginal involvement along the way, and for allowing the consultants carrying out the consultation the flexibility to change the process as they deemed necessary. It is also important to note that several responses from interviews reflected positively on individual members of the Regional Steering Group and the staff working on the Strategy.

Weaknesses

Despite these strengths, the NES Strategy was found to be lacking on many of the criteria for successful public involvement processes explored in the literature review of this thesis. ENGO respondents saw the scope of the Strategy as too narrow and as controlled by industry and government. Ecocentric arguments were effectively kept out of the discussions, limiting the range of debate to resource use perspectives (Parkins 2002). The different ideological approach of environmental groups compared with government and other societal groups was cited as a factor that undermined the effectiveness of the involvement of environmental organizations in the Strategy (Alberta Environmental Network 1993), a specific example being the perceived lack of tolerance for discussion of intrinsic values of nature in Alberta. As well, both ENGO respondents and Aboriginal respondents stated that they had not been included early enough in the Strategy (Chess and Purcell 1999; Salazer and Alper 1996). Aboriginal communities did not feel they had sufficient time to become informed about the Strategy and offer their views. Environmental organizations felt that environmental values, like protecting wilderness, were given less time to be developed than other values. There was also a perception among ENGO and Aboriginal respondents that power was not equally shared among participants, making their participation more symbolic than meaningful (Moffet 1996; Tuler and Webler 1999). As well, several respondents, including some from government, indicated that the process lacked a clearly defined set of objectives which resulted in less commitment from stakeholder groups (Chess and Purcell 1999). The expertise of those planning the effort was seen by some respondents to be inadequate, as was the level of commitment from the Ministry of Environment to the Strategy (Chess and Purcell 1999). Although there was general support for NES staff and individual members of the RSG, there was deep skepticism on the part of many respondents regarding the level of commitment of higher level bureaucrats of the provincial administration and provincial politicians to adopt the RSG's eventual recommendations.

Trust, -- an aspect of public participation that is receiving increased attention in environmental conflict literature (Moffet 1996; Salazer and Alper 1996; Treseder and Krogman 2001)--, was seen as greatly lacking between the provincial government and both environmental groups and Aboriginal organizations. Past experiences with government-led processes on the part of both groups made them very hesitant to commit time or resources to the NES Strategy. This lack of trust stemmed from the history of resource and environmental management in Alberta, that is, the context in which participation took place (Chess and Purcell 1996). With regard to environmental groups specifically, given that many of the same key groups, and even individuals within these groups, were involved in past policy processes such as the Alberta Forest Conservation Legacy and Special Places 2000, their response to the NES Strategy was greatly affected by the past history of government-ENGO relationships. Without addressing the mistrust created by these past experiences of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in Alberta, future regional strategies will be hampered in their ability to encourage the participation of these groups.

Conclusion

The finding of this study that the forestry, and oil and gas industries have a very close relationship to government will hardly be surprising for anyone familiar with Alberta's natural resource policy network. Nevertheless, it is an important contribution of this study to have documented how the consultation process both reflects and further cements this relationship. This aspect of the policy network was clearly illustrated with all respondents describing the relationship between these industries and government as much closer than the relationship between government and any other societal group. As well, this study's qualitative approach proved fruitful in identifying the subtle mechanisms used to essentially exclude environmental organizations from discussions of land and environmental management for the NES region. A research design that would have surveyed participants of the Strategy, inquiring about their satisfaction with the process, would likely have missed this finding. Another key contribution of this study was to reiterate the important role context plays in the success or failure of a public involvement process. Even the best designed process may fail if the context of relationships of the stakeholders with each other and with decision makers is not taken into account. These findings all are significant to our understanding of how land and environmental management decisions are made and who is included or excluded from the decision-making process.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The objective of this research was to reveal the nature of network governance in Alberta as it unfolded in the case of the Northern East Slopes Strategy, with specific focus on the involvement of environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in the NES network. The difficulties to involve environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups were identified with the intent of evaluating the effectiveness of the public participation approaches for these two groups and developing suggestions as to how the involvement of these groups could be improved. Below is a brief summary of the key findings of this study, and the corresponding recommendations for future regional planning strategies. The chapter ends with suggestions for future research and concluding remarks.

This study is significant in that it provides an evaluation of the Northern East Slopes Strategy with respect to its efforts to involve Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations in the Strategy process. This evaluation of this pilot project for regional planning in Alberta will be valuable for future regional planning strategies, like the Southern Alberta Regional Strategy that is currently underway. Findings from this study may be informative for both government staff, in their design of the public participation processes for the regional strategies, and for the various stakeholders who will be involved in the strategies. As well, future studies on public involvement processes in Alberta, and even Canada, may be informed by the findings of this study.

Summary of Findings

In its examination of the policy network surrounding the Northern East Slopes policy, this study illustrated the closeness of the forestry and oil and gas industries with the provincial government in Alberta. While hardly surprising for anyone familiar with the political economy of Alberta, this finding affirms what many would have assumed: the relationship between the forestry and oil and gas industries in Alberta and the provincial government is much stronger than the relationship between the provincial government and environmental organizations or Aboriginal groups in the province. This was certainly evident in the NES Strategy itself, where industry had substantially more involvement in the Strategy than environmental organizations or Aboriginal groups, but was also true of these relationships in Alberta more generally, as reported by respondents in this study. This study lends greater clarity to the patterns of relationships that reinforce the disproportionate influence of the forestry and oil and gas industries on government-led integrated resource management efforts and helps to explain how public consultation processes can be constructed to proceed without challenging the privileged position of the private sector in influencing government policy-formation. The very existence of the NES Strategy public consultation process suggests some concern for legitimation issues on the part of government, yet the design of the process, which resulted in minimal participation from environmental organizations, suggests that government has a clear sense that ENGOs cannot be co-opted. This exclusion of eco-centric perspectives in the NES Strategy suggests a progression from the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy and Special Places

2000 where environmental organization representatives did participate in the development of the policy recommendations, and the provincial government rejected them. This rejection of the recommendations put forth by the public advisory committees led to harsh criticism of the government by environmental organizations and undermined the legitimacy of the public input process. In order to avoid a similar outcome with the NES Strategy, eco-centric views were minimized at the outset.

This study found that sincere efforts were made to involve Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy but that these efforts were undermined by the context in which the Strategy took place. Several factors were found to be limiting the involvement of Aboriginal groups including outstanding land claims; lack of capacity in Aboriginal communities coupled with numerous urgent priorities, often at the provincial or federal level; and a lack of clarity over responsibilities for consultation. Quality participation on the part of Aboriginal groups cannot be expected in this context even when efforts have been made to design an appropriate Aboriginal approach to participation. Weaknesses in the NES Strategy's approach to Aboriginal involvement also hindered the participation of these groups, particularly the method of representation on the Regional Steering Group that proved inappropriate for Aboriginal people.

The involvement of environmental organizations in the NES Strategy was very limited. This was also a reflection of the context in which the Strategy took place and the design of the process itself. The NES Strategy process followed other significant projects in the province over the past decade, including the

Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy, Special Places 2000, the Al-Pac pulp mill review hearings, and the Cheviot Mine hearings. All of these projects resulted in dissatisfaction on the part of environmental organizations working in the province and deteriorated the level of trust environmental organizations had in the provincial administration. As a result, environmental groups by and large opted to remain outside of the NES Strategy process, feeling they had greater influence working outside the process. Without addressing this lack of trust and the poor quality of relationships between the provincial government and ENGOs in Alberta, little improvement can be expected in future regional planning strategies.

While context played a key role in determining the level of involvement of environmental organizations in the NES Strategy, the design of the Strategy was also flawed in this respect. The NES Strategy was not successful in creating legitimate opportunities for the inclusion of eco-centric arguments in the discussions over land and environmental management of the NES region. Environmental advocates were largely screened out of the NES process through mechanisms like having a Steering Group that was not representative of the various interests in the region, but instead was described as being comprised of individuals who could speak from multiple perspectives and who had an expertise in one. While there is evidence that representative committees can be ineffective as members may refuse to compromise when they understand their role as 'representing' their stakeholder group, the fact that the NES Steering Group was not representative effectively relieved the Strategy of any responsibility for having environmental advocacy views adequately represented. Indeed, this study found that environmental perspectives were given a very shallow treatment by those involved in the Strategy, as evidenced by the rhetoric around the selection of the Regional Steering Group, and the Draft Recommendations. A second process that screened ENGOs out of the Steering Group positions was asking them to agree to support the outcome of the Strategy beforehand, which one ENGO respondent who interviewed for a seat on the Steering Group would not do. Agreeing to this prerequisite for involvement would have been especially risky for ENGOs given the lack of control they had over the outcome of the Strategy. For industry to agree to support the outcome of the Strategy beforehand would be much less of a risk, given the high degree of influence they had over the Strategy. This case documents the governmental methods of controlling involvement in public participation processes like the NES Strategy.

It is clear from the findings of this study that the powerful oil and gas industry, with the billions of dollars of revenue it generates for the provincial administration, holds a privileged position in Alberta. The pivotal role of the oil and gas industry in Alberta has effectively narrowed the debate of land and environmental management to exclude any points of view that might challenge the status quo of this industry. Thus, a broad form of network governance like Evans prescribes-- where government is embedded in networks with various societal groups and not just industry-- is not likely to happen in Alberta with such overlap of interests on the part of natural resource industries and government. While networks may be established to some extent with Aboriginal groups, given the legal grounds for their claims to Aboriginal and treaty rights as well as their powerful international networks, it is this author's assertion that those networks will be selected and organized in such a way as to support the status quo of development of the oil and gas industries. This circumscribed nature of the networks between the provincial government and Aboriginal groups is a likely outcome because of the number of Aboriginal groups or leaders within these groups whose primary goal is economic development, rather than environmental conservation or preservation, and because of the lack of a unified Aboriginal voice in the province which will make it possible for government to prioritize, and showcase, the development of networks with those Aboriginal communities or individuals who have a pro-development stance. Network relationships with environmental organizations are less likely to be developed in the Alberta context, despite their powerful international networks, because their views will frequently, if not always, challenge the status quo of the oil and gas industry's activities in the province.

Given this assessment of state-society relationships and the environmental policy network in Alberta, prospects for greater inclusion of perspectives that are not pro-development seem remote. However, pressure for change may come from several sources including: continued environmental consequences of the status-quo, federal jurisdiction over fisheries, endangered species legislation, the Kyoto Protocol commitments, citizens' opposition to oil and gas industry activities, and mobilization by scientists and ENGOs concerned with the rapid destruction of the boreal forest and wildlife habitat. Environmental groups in this study stated that they are working with industry directly and using market mechanisms to achieve their environmental management goals, as an alternative to state mechanisms of regulating industrial activity. As well, several ENGO respondents in this study indicated they were considering "direct action" as a strategy to achieve their environmental management objectives, given their limited success through governmental procedures. This was the prediction of Stefanick and Wells (2000), who stated that the breakdown of the Special Places program may lead the "comparatively conservative Alberta environmental community" to turn towards "confrontational and media-driven tactics" (p. 368-9).

Recommendations for Future Regional Planning Strategies

The future of land and environmental management in Alberta will be greatly affected by the development of the rest of the regional plans for which the Northern East Slopes Strategy is a pilot project. A greater understanding of involvement of ENGOs and Aboriginal groups in the NES Strategy may serve to improve the design of future strategies and improve the quality of participation of both of these groups. With better inclusion of these groups in regional planning processes, a broader debate over land and environmental management can take place which will result in strategy outcomes that will better serve the people of Alberta and its environment. With that aim, the following are my recommendations for how the involvement of Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations may be improved in future regional planning strategies and other public involvement processes.

Improving the Involvement of Aboriginal Groups

Aboriginal people are clearly "not just another stakeholder" (Smith 1995) given the legal basis to their claims to land use in Alberta. Accordingly, regional planning processes may not be the most appropriate avenue for Aboriginal groups to achieve their objectives for land and environmental management. Even so, their participation in such processes is desirable as they bring a distinct point of view to projects like the NES Strategy and their concerns cannot be effectively represented by any other stakeholder. Thus, the following are recommendations as to how the quality of involvement of Aboriginal groups can be improved in processes similar to the NES Strategy.

The broader context of Aboriginal involvement must be addressed by the provincial government in order to build relationships with Aboriginal communities that will foster trust and increase the likelihood of buy-in to planning processes like the NES Strategy. The provincial government must work with the federal government to resolve outstanding Treaty Entitlement Claims and Specific Claims in a timely manner. Not only do these claims consume a great deal of the resources of Aboriginal communities, but they undermine the legitimacy of land planning processes when the rights over the land in question may be contested. As well, the provincial government needs to take a more active role in the duty to consult with Aboriginal people regarding resource developments in order to resolve conflicts between industry and Aboriginal groups, and the growing frustration of industry about having assumed the government's responsibility for this by default. As well, the capacity of Aboriginal communities must be expanded in order for them to participate in the numerous projects that require their involvement. This could be done through providing resources directly to communities to hire personnel to work on land use projects, as well as through the funding of community development projects that would include training of personnel for these purposes.

There are also several changes that should be made in subsequent regional planning strategies. Given the lack of trust that Aboriginal groups have for government projects and the limited capacity of Aboriginal communities to participate in public involvement processes, a longer time frame is necessary for improved participation of these groups in land planning processes. A longer time frame would allow for trust to be developed, and for the communities to realize the significance of the project and to better understand the process and expected outcomes. Aboriginal groups should also be involved very early in the process. This way, Aboriginal groups can be involved in setting the terms of reference of the Strategy and will not perceive their involvement as an after-thought, as was the case for some Aboriginal people in the NES Strategy. Improved Aboriginal involvement will also require additional staff and resources on the part of government to accommodate the large number of meetings that will be necessary to build trust with Aboriginal communities. Ideally, these staff would be Aboriginal themselves or at the very least have extensive cross-cultural training. Culturally sensitive staff would be better equipped to design culturally appropriate forms of involvement and representation for Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal communities may also strengthen their involvement by communicating more amongst themselves, to better understand each other's concerns, pool resources and expertise, and address the issues that arise from the lack of a single voice amongst Aboriginal groups.

Improving the Involvement of Environmental Organizations

The following are recommendations for how the involvement of environmental organizations may be improved in future regional planning strategies or similar processes. Like Aboriginal groups, stronger relationships and trust need to be developed between environmental organizations and the provincial government in order for their involvement to be strengthened. Since the mistrust of the provincial administration on the part of ENGOs developed out of disappointments with past land management processes, one clear way to re-build this trust would be through the outcomes of current and future processes. Ultimately, the government can demonstrate its commitment to the concerns of environmental organizations through legislation and policy that is required to make key changes in land management. Once adequate policies are in place, like an over-arching land management policy that is currently lacking in Alberta, ENGOs will feel more confident in becoming involved in land planning processes.

In addition to the significant action of making legislative and policy changes, several other efforts are possible to improve the involvement of environmental organizations in land and environmental planning processes in Alberta. Specific to the regional strategy process itself, environmental organizations, like Aboriginal groups, must also be involved in the development of the agenda and terms of reference for regional strategies. If they are not involved in these initial processes of the strategy, it is likely they will be dissatisfied with the terms of reference produced by government and industry alone, as was the case in the NES Strategy. As well, the provincial government needs to defend the legitimacy of involving extra-local people in land management decision-making. Alberta's public lands belong to all Albertans and involving extra-local stakeholders provides a counter-balance to local stakeholders, who may have the most intimate knowledge of the landscape, but may also be under the most intense pressure to exploit its resources.[27] At the same time, environmental organizations would do well to work more closely with local communities to better understand local concerns. A stronger presence of local grassroots environmental groups would also provide another avenue for environmental concerns to be presented without the perception of outsider interference.

ENGO respondents in this study indicated they would be willing to participate in a truly consensus based process where the provincial administration does not have the final say in what recommendations are accepted or not. However, the Southern Alberta Regional Strategy, the new regional strategy following the NES Strategy, appears to be moving in the opposite direction. The steering group for this strategy differs significantly from that of the NES Strategy which included both government and public members. In the Southern Alberta Regional Strategy, the steering group is comprised solely of government members; non-government members are relegated to a public advisory group. This format is even less likely to inspire the involvement of environmental organizations as the outcome of the strategy will remain under the strict control of government, and-- given the findings of this study regarding the relationship between industry and government in Alberta—will be greatly influenced by the interests of industry as well.

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[27] There are exceptions to this generalization, including labourers for the resource extraction industries who are not local but whose livelihoods are dependent on resource development, and Aboriginal communities whose livelihoods may be threatened by development.

Concluding Recommendations

The key to improved participation of both Aboriginal groups and environmental organizations is for the provincial government to build trust and develop relationships with both groups. In order to do this, there needs to be more continuity of staff in government departments than has been seen of late. The frequent reorganization of government departments has resulted in the frustration of Aboriginal groups, environmental organizations and industry alike. These groups cannot develop relationships with departments in an abstract form; there needs to be people in the department that are part of the relationship. Again, there is the need for balance in this situation as relationships that are too personal in nature run the risk of being captured, but some institutional memory and continuity is needed in order for relationships of trust to be established. This may be most true in the case of Aboriginal groups who in general may be said to operate in less of a bureaucratic model than industry or even mainstream, Western environmental organizations.

It is important to note as well that bureaucrats receive little incentive or reward for relationship building activities. Government initiatives are always susceptible to criticisms of inefficacy and wastefulness if they do not produce quantifiable results. Thus, bureaucrats are under pressure to produce measurable, visible results of a project that are capable of convincing the public that taxpayers' dollars are being well spent. The development of relationships with stakeholders is a less persuasive outcome in this regard than goals, strategies and indicators. Thus, incentives or rewards must be available for bureaucrats who work to develop relationships with stakeholders and the importance of doing so must be defended to the public in terms of the quality of the final product.

With quality involvement of environmental organizations, Aboriginal groups and the other stakeholders with interests in Alberta's land and environmental management, the regional planning processes will need well trained personnel to successfully manage the various, competing perspectives on land use. Managing the multiple interests involved in land management may be one of the most difficult challenges facing land managers today. It is a task that requires adequate staff and resources and has no simple formula for guaranteed success. However, reducing the complexity by eliminating some voices from the arena of discourse is not an acceptable response to the challenge. Continuing to develop regional strategies without addressing outstanding Aboriginal issues and without buy-in of environmental groups will result, not only in poorer policy outcomes, but also in continued conflict over land uses, which was one of the key reasons for developing the regional plans in the first place.

Future Areas for Research

This research would be supplemented by further research in several areas. Quantitative research that would survey a statistically significant sample of stakeholders involved in land and environmental planning processes would also be useful in that it would provide generalizable results regarding these policy networks. As well, a more comprehensive study of stakeholders (including labour, tourism, scientists and recreational groups) involved in Alberta's land and environmental management would be appropriate to further examine the policy network and to identify obstacles to meaningful involvement of these groups. A follow-up study once the NES Strategy has been completed and some time has passed to allow for implementation of the recommendations would also be valuable in providing a complete picture of the policy process from agenda setting to implementation. As well, a comparative case study analysis that compares public policy formation in Alberta with that of other provinces in Canada may clarify what aspects of state-society relations are specific to Alberta and which are consistent across Canada. A comparison of public policy formation in Alberta with other jurisdictions that are heavily dependent on oil and gas extraction, such as Texas or Norway, may help explain to what extent Alberta's environmental policy network is a result of the material circumstance of having abundant oil and gas resources, or the ideological orientations of this particular province or administration.

In a different vein, further research into the gendered nature of policy processes in Alberta would be valuable as well. A need for this type of research has been identified in work by Reed (1997) and Natcher (2001), both for non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal stakeholders. A gender analysis of these processes may identify inequalities of participation within stakeholder groups and particular obstacles for involvement faced by women or men.

As well, more research is needed on how networks with non-industrial groups may be established in a setting like Alberta where the ideology of the provincial administration and the interests of the resource industries are so closely intertwined. This is a weakness of Evans' work on embedded autonomy. An examination of existing examples of a broad form of embedded autonomy, where government has successfully established networks with a large number of societal groups, would help those designing and those participating in public involvement processes to make the most of what network relationships have to offer. These benefits may include access to key information from multiple groups that will allow for the development of more appropriate and effective policies, greater support for land planning processes, and lower incidences of conflict among land users.

Concluding Remarks

When dealing with conflicts in any situation, it is easy to arrive at the conclusion that one's goal should be to eliminate all conflict. However, much research suggests that conflict itself can serve a healthy function in society and the aim should not be to avoid or eliminate conflict, but to manage it successfully (Beckley, Boxall, Just, and Wellstead 1999). By failing to include all perspectives in land planning processes in a meaningful way, the Alberta government's approach to regional planning is likely to result in more conflict rather than less. Thus it is important that better approaches be developed to include environmental organizations and Aboriginal groups in the development of these regional strategies.

The findings of this study illustrate that improving the involvement of these groups will require case-specific solutions. No formula or checklist of key ingredients to quality public participation will result in meaningful involvement of these groups in a context where trust is lacking and events of the past are still plaguing relationships today. Thus a sincere commitment is needed on the part of government to develop approaches that will address current relationships with these groups and work towards closer involvement in the future.

The uncertainty of the science of land and environmental management, and the ultimately value-based nature of land use decisions makes it essential that the public become more engaged in a broad debate over possible options for land use. This debate must include a broad range of interests in land use in order to safeguard against short term decision-making that may value short term economic benefits over long term ecological sustainability.

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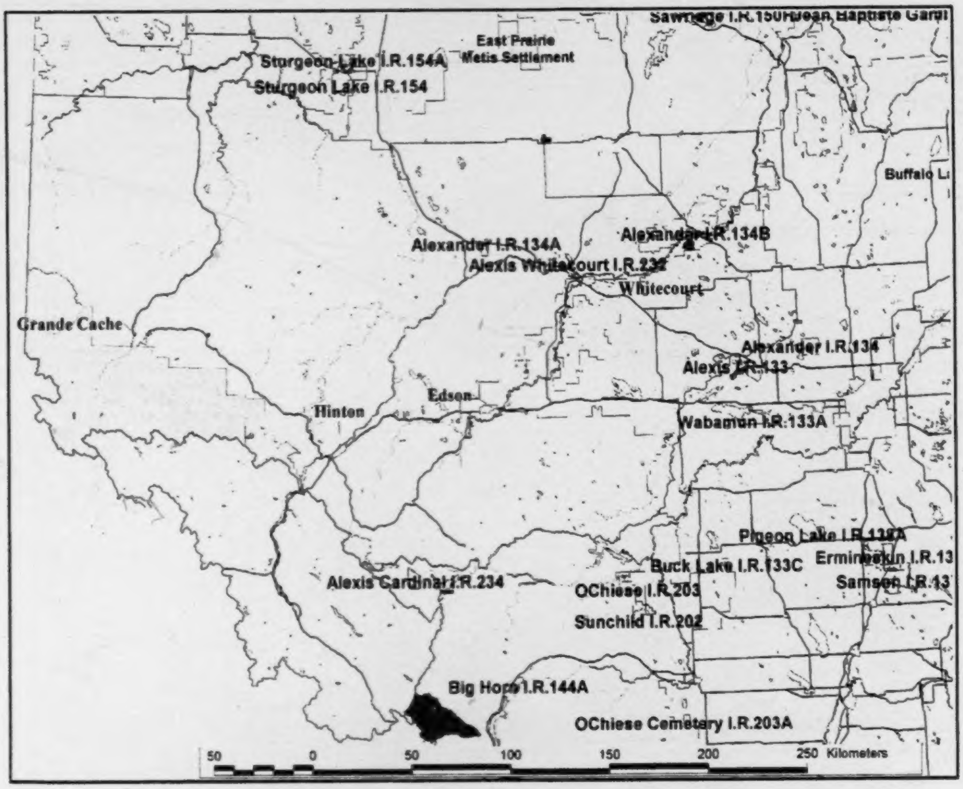
Appendix I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Grande Cache
Alexander I.R.134
Alexis I.R.133
Edson
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Wabamun I.R.133A
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Buck Lake I.R.133C
Ermineskin I.R.13
Samson I.R.13
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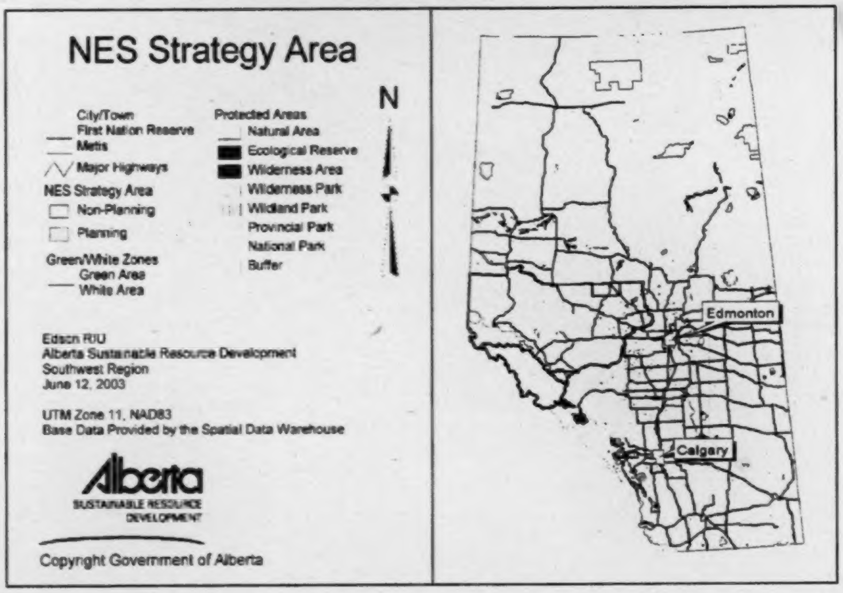
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Natural Area
Ecological Reserve
Wilderness Area
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Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Southwest Region
June 12, 2003
UTM Zone 11, NAD83
Base Data Provided by the Spatial Data Warehouse
Alberta
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Maps provided by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

Appendix II

NES Strategy Regional Vision, Values and Goals

Regional Vision

"Integrated management of natural resources in a manner which ensures a healthy and sustainable environment, economy, and community that can be enjoyed by present and future generations."

Value: **Wise resource use**

Goals:

- To optimize all value added opportunities from the resource.
- To minimize waste.
- To encourage sustainable use.
- To integrate activities among all stakeholders and governments.

Value: **Healthy and sustainable communities**

Goals:

- To understand, respect and protect a community's culture and sense of being.
- To encourage sustainable resource use and economic diversity through regional economic activities and cooperation.

Value: **Healthy and sustainable economy**

Goals:

- To optimize economic benefits and economic stability through diversification.
- To encourage conditions that maintain opportunities for resource development.

Value: **Healthy and sustainable environment**

Goals:

- Conservation of biological diversity at the ecosystem, species and genetic levels within the region.
- To ensure that the quality of air, water, and soil are at healthy level.

Value: **Wilderness lands**

Goals:

- To integrate management of designated protected areas within the regional landscape.
- To ensure wilderness lands are maintained.

Value: **Public enjoyment of the great outdoors**

Goals:

- To provide opportunities for responsible enjoyment and appreciation of our natural environment.

Value: **Integrity and fairness in decision making**

Goals:

- To assure that decision-making processes are timely, transparent, predictable, consistent, fair and equitable.
- To ensure decisions are made and revisited in light of current science, technology and societal values.

Value: **Aboriginal way of life**

Goals:

- To provide opportunities for Aboriginal communities to determine how they wish to participate in land and natural resource management.

- To provide opportunities for Traditional knowledge/Aboriginal wisdom to be incorporated into land and resource management decisions as it relates to integrated resource management.
- To ensure that government, industry, and other stakeholders respect aboriginal culture, values and traditions.
- To provide opportunities for continued use of land and resources by Aboriginal people.

Value: **Capacity building**
Goals:
- To assist Aboriginal communities to build capacity to participate in Integrated Resource Management initiatives through education, training and financial support.
- To assist government, industry and other key stakeholders to build capacity about Aboriginal issues with regard to land, resources and culture.

Value: **History and historical resources**
Goals:
- To ensure that historical resources are identified and respected in the decision-making process.
- To ensure that our history is understood and respected in the decision-making process.

Source: Regional Steering Group 2003a

Appendix III

Original Regional Steering Group Members

Citizens-at-Large:

Peter Aschenmeier (Edson)

- Family farm operator
- Worked in oil field industry, contract logging business, trucking business, heavy construction
- Involved in Agriculture Service Board, San Lake Grazing Association, NES Grazing Advisory Committee, Yellowhead Recreation Board, Agricultural Land Use Initiative

Brad Johnston (Calgary)

- Holds degree in environmental studies from University of Waterloo
- Works for Burlington Resources Canada Energy

Fraser Cutten (Calgary) (Replaced Brad Johnston, date unknown)

- Works for Petro-Canada

Rick Ksiezopolski (Hinton)

- Works for Weldwood Hinton Forest Resources

Caroline Kutash (Hinton)

- Instructor at the Forestry Training Centre in Hinton

Brenda McFayden-Landry (Grande Cache)

- Works on environmental program management with local industry
- Family owned guide and outfitting business
- Educational background in biological and environmental sciences

Fred Munn (Hinton) CHAIR

- Manager of Technical Services for Luscar Ltd's Cardinal River Coals
- Acted as Project Manager for the Cheviot Mine Project

Jonathan Russel (Whitecourt/St. Albert)

- Chief Forester for Millar Western Forest Products

Non-Status Aboriginal Representative:

David MacPhee (Grande Cache)

- President of Aseniwuche Winewak Nation
- President of the Aseniwuche Development Corporation
- Trained counselor, experienced logger, member of many committees and boards, skilled translator

Government Representatives:

Local Government:

Gary Mahon (Edson)

- Teacher and principal

- Mayor of Town of Edson
- Represents the West Central Mayors and Reeves Caucus on the NES Regional Steering Group
- Member of Sundance Creek Local Committee
- Town of Edson contact for the Sundance Provincial Park Management Planning Process

Federal Government:

Ron Hooper (Jasper)
- Superintendent of Jasper National Park

Provincial Government:

Alberta Environment:
Mike Poscente
- NES Regional Director for the Land and Forest Service of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
- Currently Manager, Fire Management, Sustainable Resource Development, no longer on RSG

Alberta Resource Development:
Rhonda Wehrhahn
- Manager, Mineral Access and Development, Mineral Access, Geology and Mining
- Bachelors degree in Agriculture, Range and Wildlife Science, Masters in Business Administration
- Currently Business Unit Leader for Tenure of Mineral Development and Strategic Resources

Jennifer Steber (Replaced Rhonda Wehrhahn on June 19, 2001)
- Director of Land Access and Development
- Bachelor Degree in environmental studies, Masters in Landscape Architecture in Regional Planning, Public Administration certificate

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development:
Gerry Dube
- Branch Head, North West Boreal Region
- Currently Rangeland Head of North East Region

Dan Smith (Replaced Gerry Dube February 2001)

- Northwest Region Director for Public Lands of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
- Currently Rangeland Head, South West Region

Alberta Economic Development:
Allen Harlton
- Regional Manager, Edson Region, Tourism and Industry Regional Development

Sources: Regional Steering Group 2001; Abells and Henry 2001; Government of Alberta 2002; Interviews

Appendix IV

Meetings for First Phase of NES Strategy Consultations
October-November, 2000

Date	Type of Consultation	Group Consulted	Number of Participants
October 16	Public	Hinton	40
October 16	Aboriginal	Nakcowinewak Nation	2
October 17	Public	Grande Cache	18
October 17	Public	Fox Creek	3
October 18	Public	Edson	25
October 18	Aboriginal	Alexis Indian Band	10
October 19	Public	Whitecourt	16
October 23	Public	Grande Prairie	12
October 23	Public	Drayton Valley	23
October 25	Aboriginal	Aseniwuche Winewak Nation	11
October 25	Aboriginal	Métis Nation of Alberta – Zone IV	3
October 30	Targeted	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP); Energy and Utilities Board (EUB)	12
October 31	Aboriginal	Alexander First Nation	5
November 2	Targeted	Government Employees – Edson	55
November 6	Targeted	Government Employees – Edmonton	20
November 8	Targeted	Environmental Organizations	12
November 9	Targeted	Government Employees – Grande Prairie	25
November 15	Targeted	Forestry Industry	8
November 29	Targeted	Agriculture Industry	11
November 30	Targeted	Tourism Industry	0
		Total Public Participation:	**137**
		Total Targeted Participation:	**143**
		Total Aboriginal Participation:	**31**

Sources: Regional Steering Group 2001; Four Winds & Associates 2000

Appendix V

Task Team Members

Aboriginal Task Team:

Denise Parsons- Department of Energy
Rachelle McDonald- Aseniwuche Winewak Nation
Jimmy O'Chiese- Original People
Bob Phillips- Shahayla Consulting Ltd.
Dave Kamet- Weldwood of Canada Ltd.
Lisa Weber- Métis Nation of Alberta Zone IV
Bill Parsons- Devon Canada Corporation
Eric Mohun- Keyspan Energy Canada; Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP)
Jamie Honda-McNeil- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
Past Original Members:
Bruce Mayer- Sustainable Resource Development
Richard LaBoucane- Weldwood of Canada Ltd.
David Weeks- Alberta Environment
Gina Potts- Alexis First Nation

Biophysical Task Team:

George Robertson, Chairman- Sustainable Resource Development
Dave Laing- Sustainable Resource Development
Marty O'Byrne- Sustainable Resource Development
Brian Wallach- Sustainable Resource Development
Dave Karasek- Sustainable Resource Development
Bill Tinge- Sustainable Resource Development
Troy Sorensen- Sustainable Resource Development
Don Brewer- Sustainable Resource Development
Erica Mueller- Sustainable Resource Development
Don Page- Sustainable Resource Development
Don Hilderbrandt- Sustainable Resource Development
Kevin Freehill- Sustainable Resource Development
Kirby Smith- Sustainable Resource Development
Cam Lane- Sustainable Resource Development
Dr. David W. Andison- Bandaloop Landscape-Ecosystem Services
Norman Sawatsky- Alberta Environment
Rodney Jones- Alberta Environment
Daniel Farr- ALCES

Economic Task Team:

Mike Patriquin- PQ Consulting Services
Sharad Karmachary- Forestry Economics
Neil Morehouse- Economic Development

Social Task Team:

Susan Abells- Abells Henry Public Affairs
Michael Henry- Abells Henry Public Affairs

Source: Regional Steering Group 2003a

Appendix VI

Meetings for Second Phase of NES Strategy Consultations

January-February 2002

Date	Type of Consultation	Group Consulted	Number of Participants
January 8	Aboriginal	Grande Cache	26
January 12	Aboriginal	Marlboro	6
January 17	Aboriginal	Enoch Cree Nation	12
January 24	Aboriginal	O'Chiese First Nation	6
February 6	Public	Fort Assiniboine	12
February 7	Public	Swan Hills	35
February 9	Aboriginal	Métis Nation of Alberta – Zone IV	22
Not known	Targeted	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP); Energy and Utilities Board (EUB)	10
February 11	Public	Whitecourt	11
February 12	Public	Edson	75-100
Not known	Targeted	Agriculture	0
Not known	Targeted	Tourism	15
Not known	Targeted	Forestry	14
February 13	Public	Hinton	65-75
February 14	Public	Jasper	8
Not known	Targeted	Government - Hinton	6
February 19	Public	Grande Cache	12
Not known	Targeted	Government – Grand Prairie	3
February 20	Public	Grand Prairie	12
February 21	Public	Valleyview	3
February 25	Public	Drayton Valley	12
February 26	Public	Barrhead	24
Not known	Targeted	Environmental Organizations	2
Not known	Targeted	Government - Edmonton	3
		Total Public Participation:	**269-304**
		Total Targeted Participation:	**53**
		Total Aboriginal Participation:	**72**

Sources: Integrated Resource Management 2002b; Abells and Henry 2002; Four Winds and Associates 2002

Appendix VII

Information Sheet, Summer 2001

(Note: A similar version was used for Summer 2000)

Integrated Resource Management: Opportunities and Constraints

The Project
The purpose of this study is to evaluate opportunities and constraints for integrated resource management in Alberta's boreal forest, particularly between the oil and gas industries and the forest industry. We are interviewing key people in industry, government, Aboriginal communities and non-governmental organizations to understand their perspectives. We hope that this research will help to minimize conflicts between industry and other stakeholders in the boreal forest, as well as to provide insight as to how cumulative impacts of development can be reduced.

There are three stages to this research project. The first stage, completed in May 2001, was to analyze the policy regime for both the oil and gas and forestry sectors. The second stage, carried out in the summer and fall of 2001, was to conduct interviews with key government and industry personnel involved in natural resource management. These interviews provided preliminary information on the opportunities and constraints for IRM. The final stage of this project is currently underway and is intended to generate a more detailed understanding of the opportunities and constraints for IRM by comparing various IRM initiatives in several regions of the province.

This research will be useful to policy makers and resource managers as it will describe the constraints and opportunities that affect the coordination of oil and gas and forestry activities on the same land base. In addition, this research will provide suggestions for the development of cooperative efforts in IRM.

The Interview
We are asking for an hour or two of your time for an interview on this topic. With your consent, we will tape-record the interview. The interview will be transcribed either by the researchers or by a transcriber. Only the researchers of the project and transcriber will have access to the tapes from the interview, which will be destroyed six months after publication of the final report. The information from the interviews will be used in two Master of Science theses at the University of Alberta as well as other publications resulting from the research.

All participants will be referred to by a code rather than by name upon completion of the interview to ensure confidentiality. Your name will not appear in any publications, rather you will be referred to by your organizational affiliation (e.g. government, forest industry, oil and gas industry, First Nations or non-governmental organizations). However, for industry participants in certain case study areas, you may be referred to by your company name. While we try to assure anonymity of your responses in all written work generated from this project, some readers may be able to identify you by the text of your responses. You may decline to answer any of our questions and are free to stop the interview at any time.

Appendix IX

Interview Questionnaire, Summer 2001

Questions for Industry, Government and Environmental Organizations:

1. Tell me about (your company, department, organization), and your position with them. What is your experience in general with resource management?

2. What is your understanding of or definition of Integrated Resource Management?

3. Often there are multiple users working in one area, or who have interest in an area: Who are some of the groups or individuals who have an interest in the region where you (operate, work)?

4. What do you see as the main differences between the policy regimes, or regulatory regimes, of the oil and gas industries and the forestry industry in Alberta?
   -Do you think the two industries are working on a level playing field or is one held to higher standards than the other?
   -Are the expectations of government/public the same for both industries?

5. How do you think government policy could be improved to facilitate the integration of the activities of the forestry and oil and gas industries?

6. Are you familiar with any IRM initiatives in Alberta?

7. (If familiar with NES or Athabasca strategies) To what degree do you think the (NES/Athabasca) strategy will allow for **resource management at the landscape level**, rather than an industry-by-industry or activity-by-activity approach?
   -What factors do you see as limiting/enabling a landscape management approach in Alberta?
   - How successful do you think this policy will be in integrating the management of the resources in that area?

8. What effect do you think the (NES, Athabasca) strategy will have on managing the cumulative effects of multiple use on a common land base?

9. What effect do you think the (NES, Athabasca) strategy will have on conflicts between users on a land base?

8. Do you think a possible outcome of the (NES/Athabasca) strategy would be to limit industrial activities in those areas? Ie. Reduce AAC or number of mineral dispositions?

10. Do you know of (other) industry initiatives of integrated resource management in Alberta?
    IF YES: What do you think motivated these companies to engage in their project?
    What do companies stand to gain by being in an IRM project? What do they stand to lose?

11. Do you foresee more formal integration between forestry and oil and gas industries in the future?

12. What do you think the differences are, if any, between industry-led IRM initiatives and government-led IRM initiatives? [Probes: stakeholders included, scope of project]

Additional Questions for Forestry or Oil and Gas Industry Respondents:

1. In what ways has your company integrated its activities with (other industry)?
   [If company does not integrate at all, then ask: Why hasn't your company integrated its activities with (other sector).]

2. How does current provincial policy and regulation affect your company's ability to integrate its activities with (other industry)?

Additional Questions for Government Respondents:

1. Are you familiar with the Integrated Resource Plans that were initiated in the 1970's?
   -In what ways do you feel this project was successful/failed?
   -Why do you think this project was eventually cancelled?

2. How do you think the current Integrated Resource Management strategies are different than the IRPs of the 1970's?
   -Do you think the new IRM strategies are likely to succeed? Why or why not?

3. (If familiar with Al-Pac/Gulf program) Is your agency involved in any way with the integrated land management project proposed by Al-Pac and Gulf Canada Resources?

4. Do you think a project similar to the ILM project could be arranged for conventional oil and gas activities, or is the integration of activities easier to do with the oil sands?

Questions for Aboriginal Respondents:

1. What is your understanding of integrated resource management?

2. Do you think there is a need for oil/gas and forestry to better coordinate their efforts in the boreal forest area of Alberta? If so, how do you think this could be done?

3. What level of industrial resource development is there in your area?

4. Do companies working in your area have to notify you? If so, in what way?

5. Do you have a staff person who deals with development applications?

6. Are you aware of the Northern East Slopes Strategy?
   a. If so, what is your assessment of aboriginal involvement?
   b. Do you think the Strategy will be successful in addressing aboriginal concerns?
   c. What do you think is the motivation for the Strategy?

7. Are you aware of the Alpac-Gulf IRM initiative with the Chamber of Resources?
   a. If so, what is your assessment of aboriginal involvement?
   b. Do you think this initiative will be successful in addressing aboriginal concerns?
   c. What do you think is the motivation for the initiative?

8. Do you think there's a need to set thresholds for development? If so, do you think these IRM initiatives will lead to thresholds?

9. Do you think its possible that IRM initiatives could actually lead to more or faster development?

10. How do you feel your concerns fit into the province's policies for resource development?

All Respondents:

1. Can you think of anyone else we should talk to for our project?
2. Is there anyone who holds a very different viewpoint that we should talk to?
3. Would you like a copy of the executive summary of our report when it is finished (likely early 2003)?

Appendix X

Interview Questionnaire, Summer 2002

1.0 Relationship of Government with Key Stakeholder Groups

1.1. [**NOT** GOV Respondents] How would you characterize your (sector, company, organization's) relationship with government?

Possible prods: Do you have a close working relationship? Are relations positive? Are your concerns being addressed?

1.2. [**NOT** IND Respondents]

How would you characterize the relationship between government and industry?

1.3. [**NOT** ENGO Respondents] How would you characterize the relationship between government and ENGOs in the province?

1.4. [**NOT** FN Respondents] How would you characterize the relationship between government and Aboriginal peoples in the province?

2.0. Stakeholder Participation in NES Strategy: Questions for Participants

(Fill in the blank with organization/company/FN band you are talking to.)
[**NOT** GOV Respondents]

2.1. Was _________ invited to participate in the NES project? Did _______ accept this invitation?

For those participants that ARE involved:

2.2. What level of involvement has _______ had in the NES project to date?
2.3. How much influence does ________ feel they have over the NES process?
2.4. Is _______ content with their current level of participation/influence?
2.5. What are _________ goals for participating in this project?
2.6. What strategies is _________using to reach these goals? {Probes: focusing efforts on one project, publicity campaigns, phoning individuals with influence, media, etc.}

For those participants who ARE NOT involved:

2.7. Why has the involvement of _______ been minimal? {probe: priorities of the organization, the nature of the process, resources available to group}
2.8. What are _______ 's goals for natural resource or environmental management in the province?
2.9. Does _______ see the NES project as a vehicle to obtain those goals? Why or why not?
2.10. What other means is _________ pursuing to achieve its goals? {Probes: focusing efforts on one project, publicity campaigns, phoning individuals with influence, media, etc.}

2.11. What factors do you think have affected (either enhanced or constrained) the amount of influence _________ has had over the NES process?
2.12. What could have been done to improve the participation of _______?

2.13. Who are the core individuals or groups involved in NES? {probe: those who have the most influence over the process}

2.14. Who *should* make up this core? Why? {probe: do they have particular expertise}

2.15. Who is _______ working most closely with to pursue its goals for environmental management or IRM?

Which of the organizations in the list:

2.16. does _______ consider sympathetic to their understanding or position about how to address environmental issues?
2.17. does _______ consider to be in opposition to their understanding or position about how to address environmental issues?
2.18. Are there groups that ________ thinks it would be advantageous to work with? {Probe: even if you don't share the same ideas, a group that you may think it's necessary to work with to achieve your goals?}
2.19. in addition to the core participants you mentioned before [ie. In #2], are there any other organizations on this list that you think are central to the NES project?

3.0. Stakeholder Participation in NES Strategy: Questions for Government

[**NOT** for stakeholder being addressed in questions]

Regarding ENGOs

3.1. How would you describe the involvement of environmental organizations in the NES project to date?
3.2. Describe the difficulties you've experienced in involving environmental organizations in the NES project.
3.3. How do you think involvement of environmental organizations in this strategy or other government projects can be improved?

Regarding First Nations

3.4. How would you describe the involvement of First Nations in the NES project to date?

3.5. Describe the difficulties you've experienced in involving First Nations in the NES project.

3.6. How do you think involvement of First Nations in this strategy or other government projects can be improved? (Prompt: both what government can/should do and what First Nations can/should do)

Regarding Industry

3.7. How would you describe the involvement of industry in the NES project to date?
3.8. Describe the difficulties you've experienced in involving industry in the NES project.
3.9. How do you think involvement of industry in this strategy or other government projects can be improved?